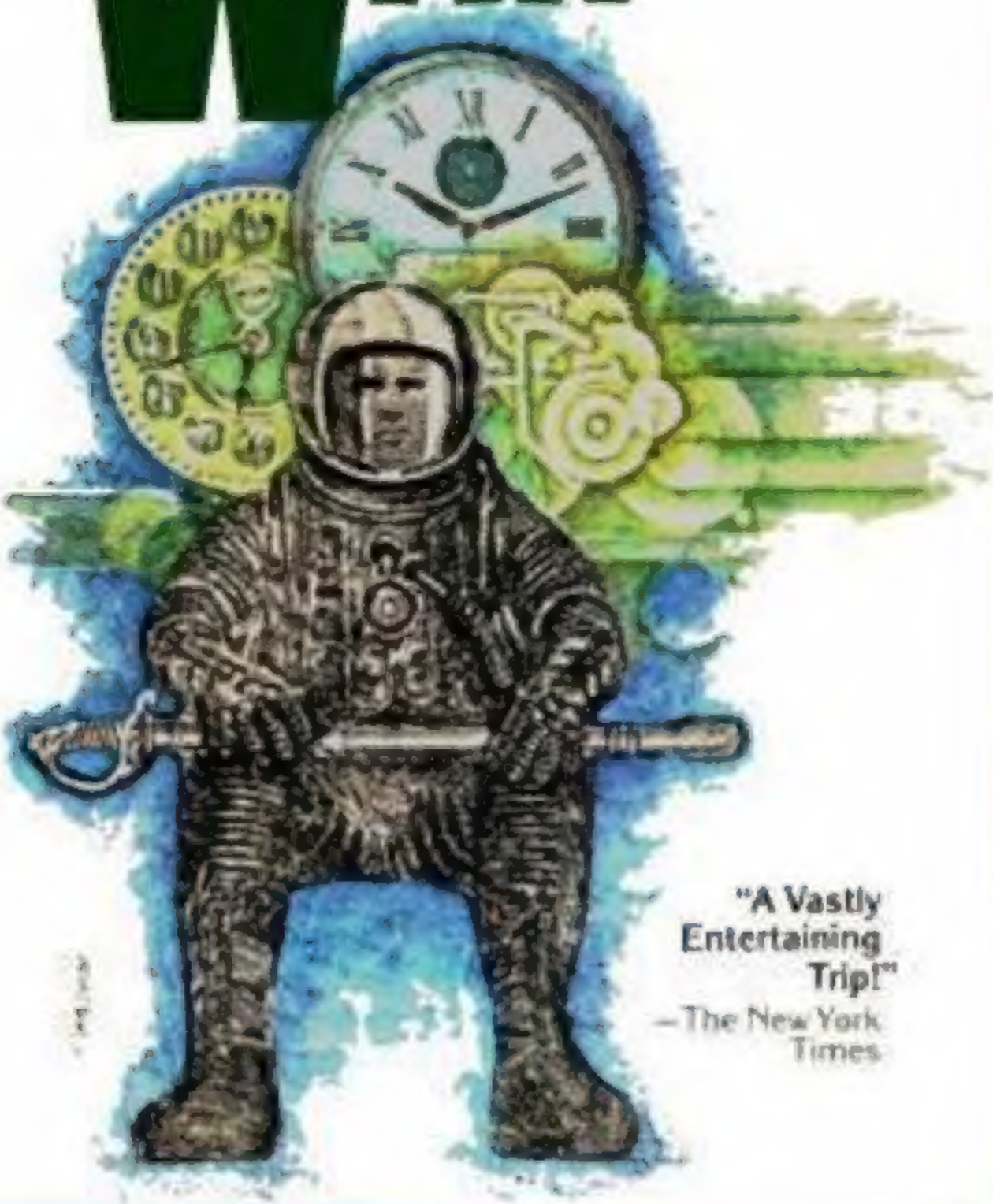
The Forever War
3: Major Mandella

24767/$1.50

A DAZZLING & POWERFUL SCIENCE FICTION CATCH-22!

THE FOREVER WAR

JOE HALDEMAN



"A Vastly Entertaining Trip!"
—The New York Times

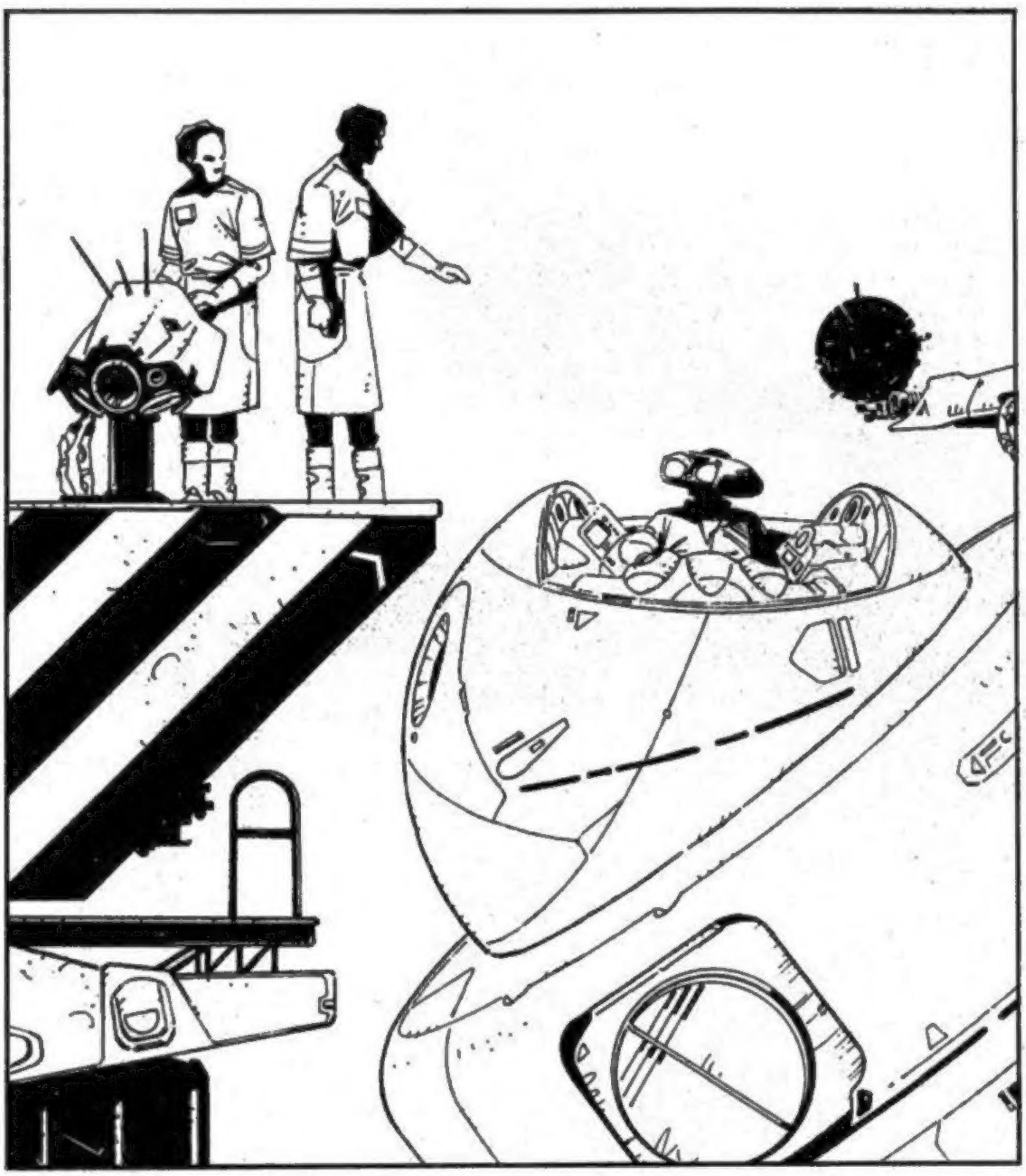
THE FOREVER WAR

Book Three

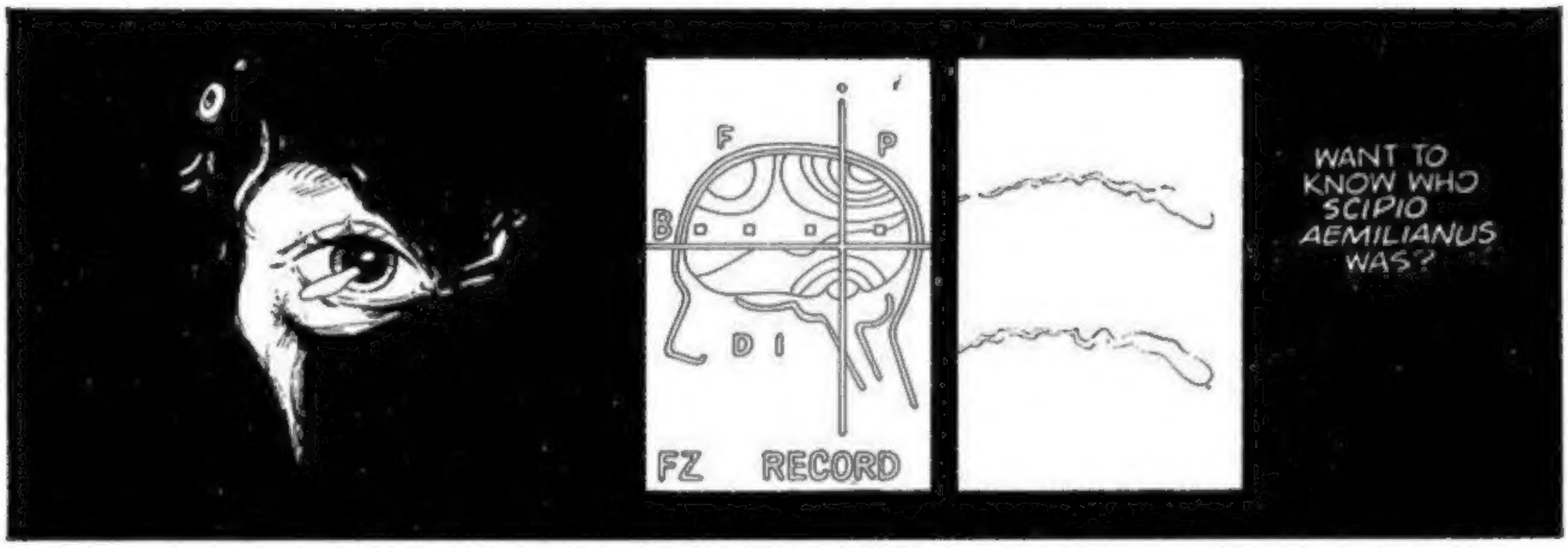
By

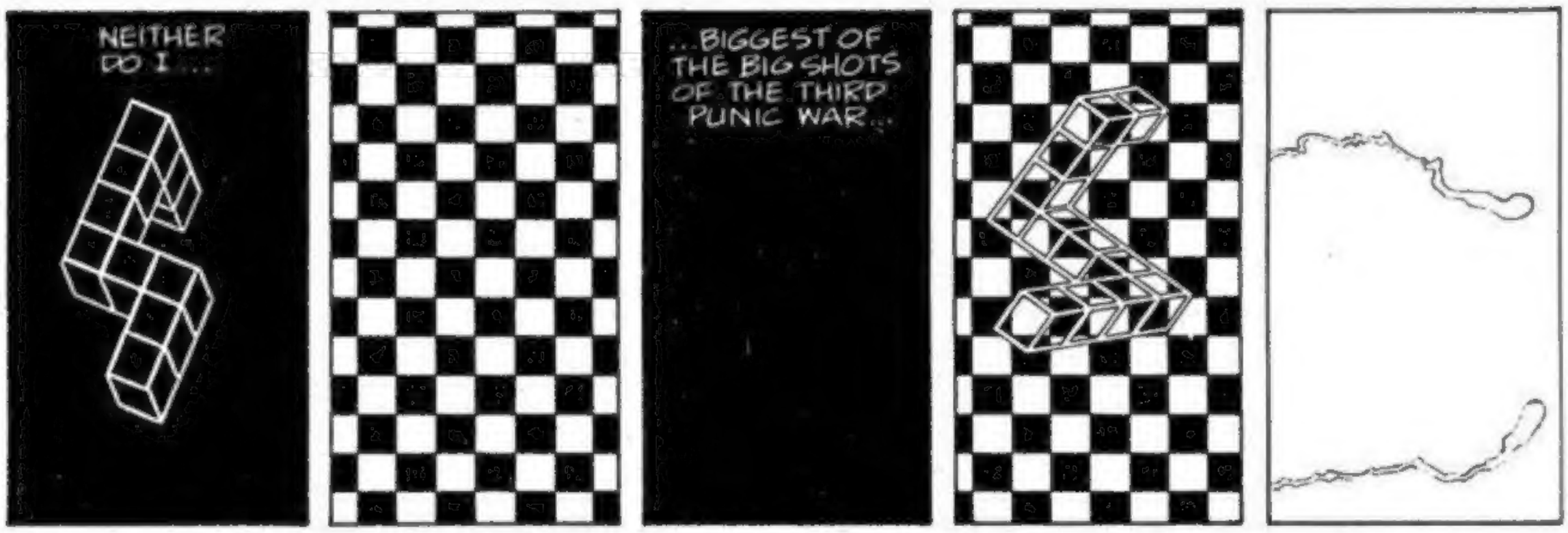
HALDEMAN

& MARVANO

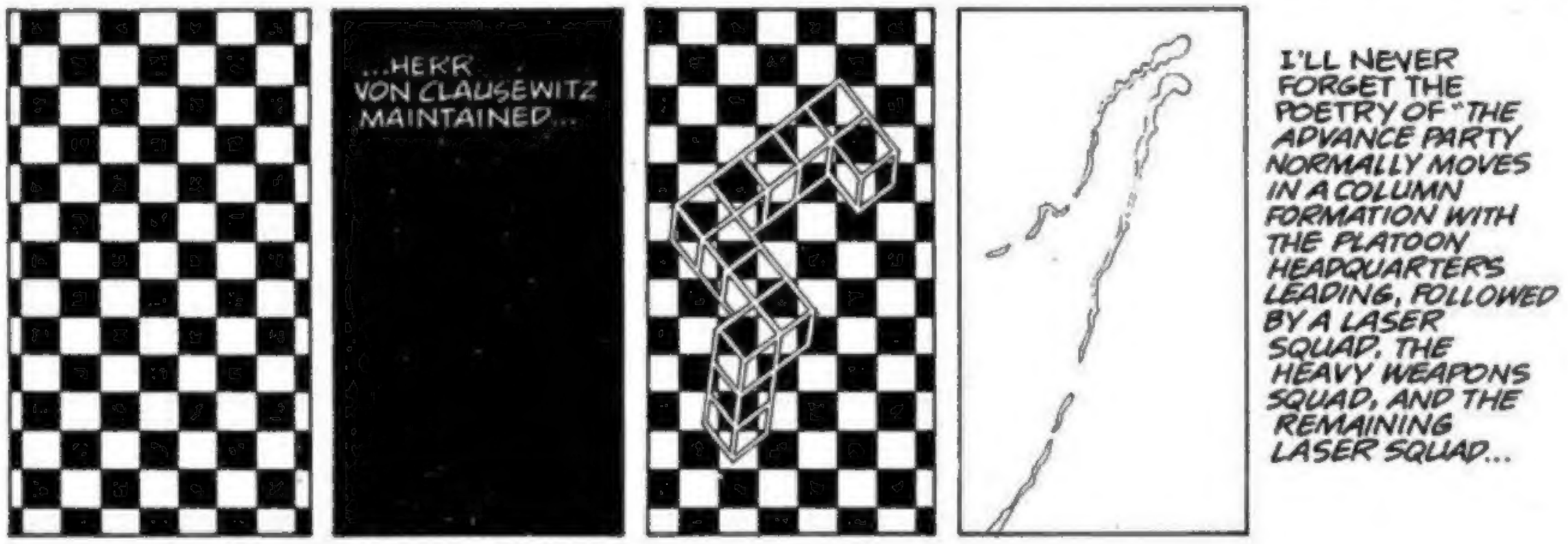


Chapter One

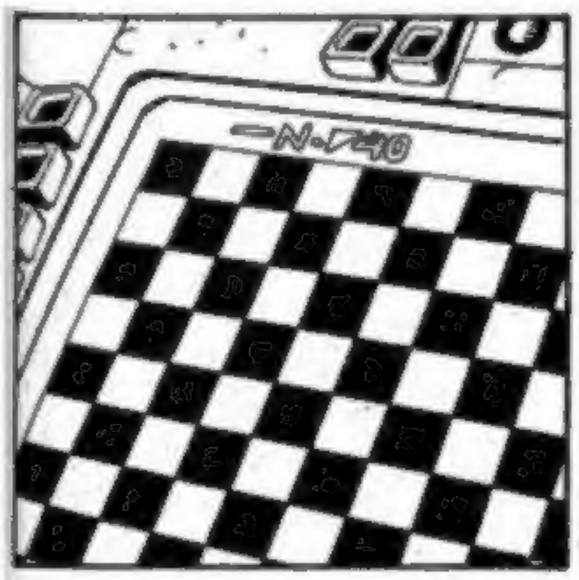

F
P
B
D I
FZ
RECORD
WANT TO KNOW WHO SCIPIO AEMILIANUS WAS?

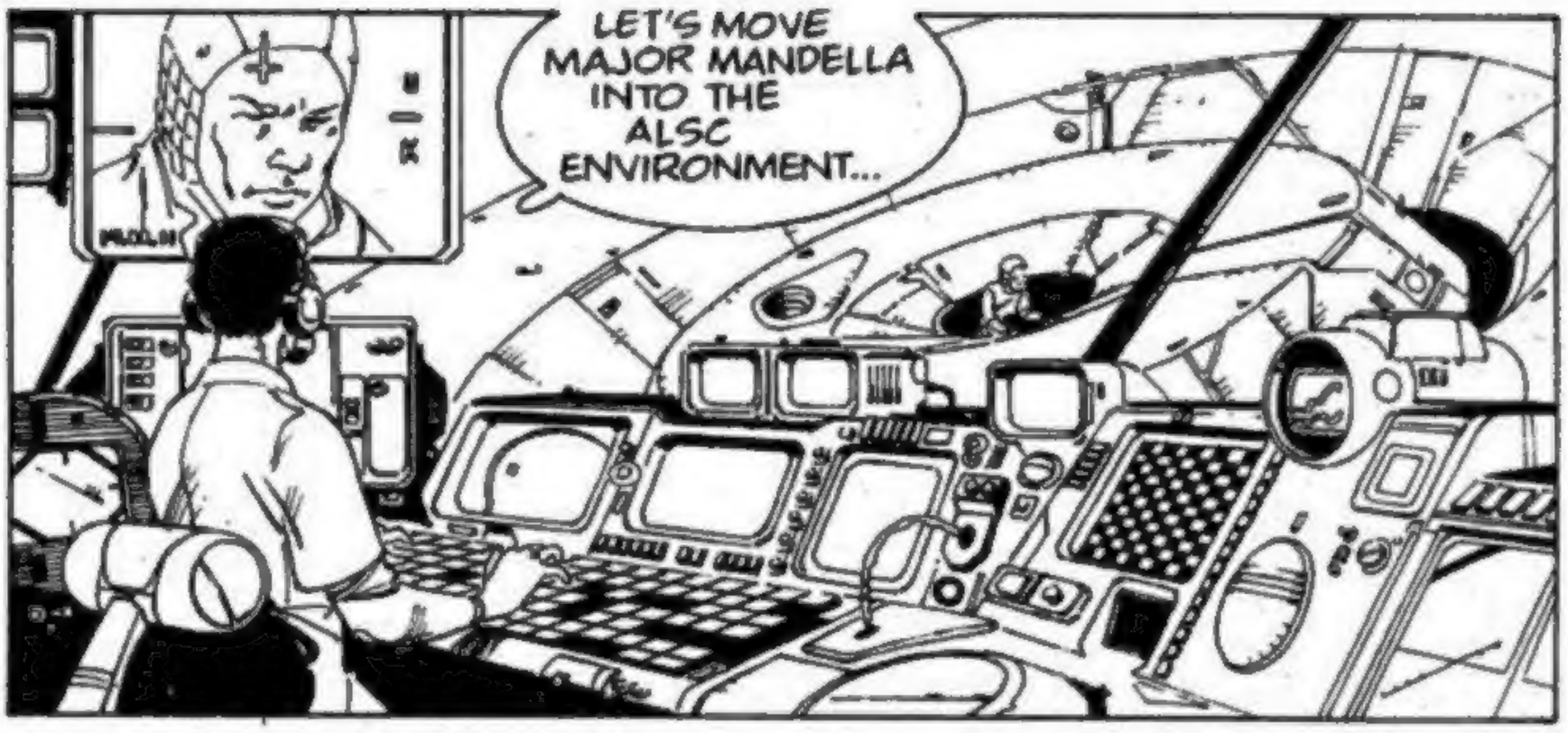

NEITHER DO I...
...BIGGEST OF THE BIG SHOTS OF THE THIRD PUNIC WAR...

"WAR IS THE PROVINCE OF DANGER, AND THEREFORE COURAGE ABOVE ALL THINGS IS THE FIRST QUALITY OF A WARRIOR."


...HERR VON CLAUSEWITZ MAINTAINED...
I'LL NEVER FORGET THE POETRY OF "THE ADVANCE PARTY NORMALLY MOVES IN A COLUMN FORMATION WITH THE PLATOON HEADQUARTERS LEADING, FOLLOWED BY A LASER SQUAD, THE HEAVY WEAPONS SQUAD, AND THE REMAINING LASER SQUAD...

"...THE COLUMN RELIES ON OBSERVATION FOR ITS FLANK SECURITY EXCEPT WHEN..."

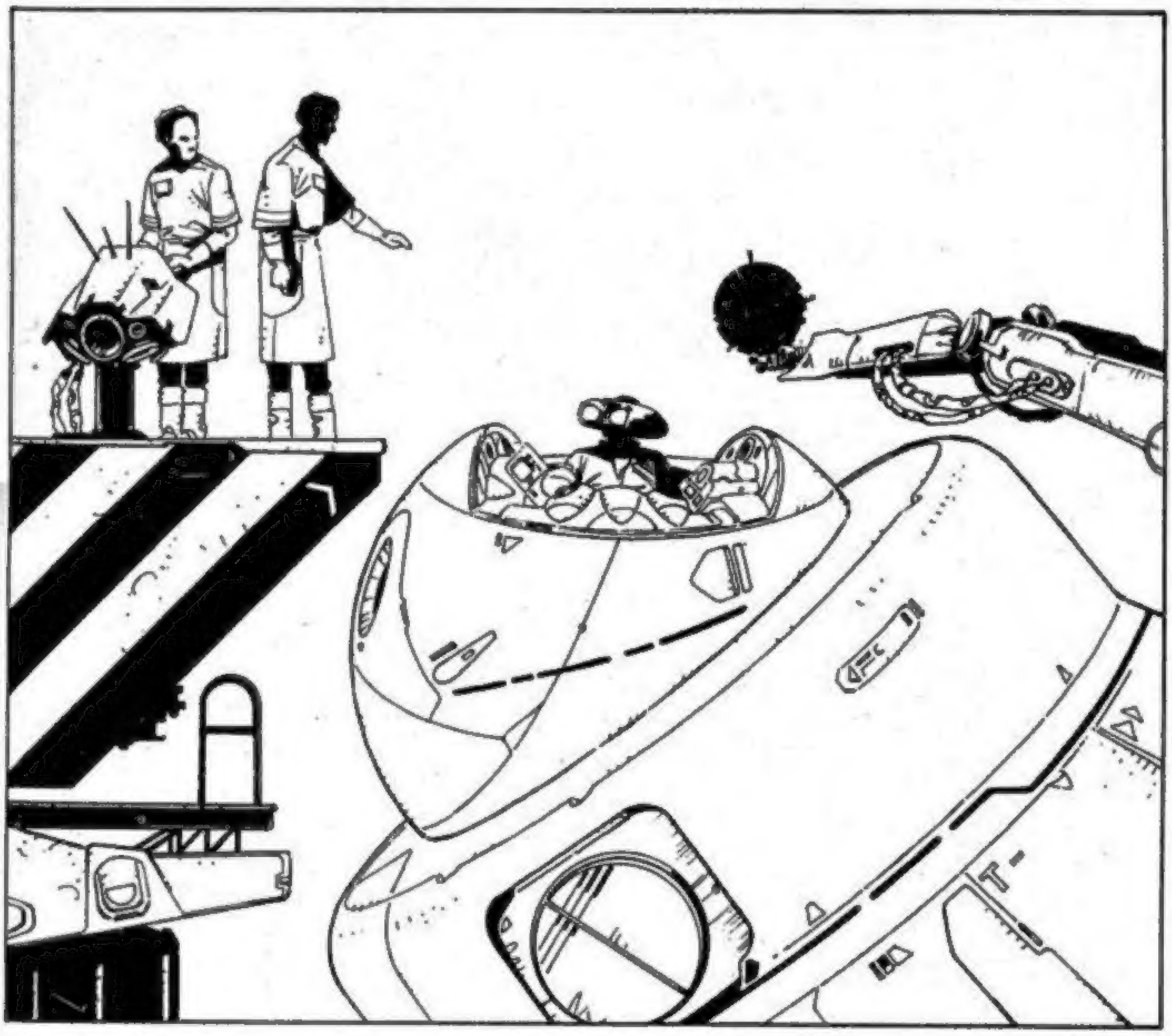




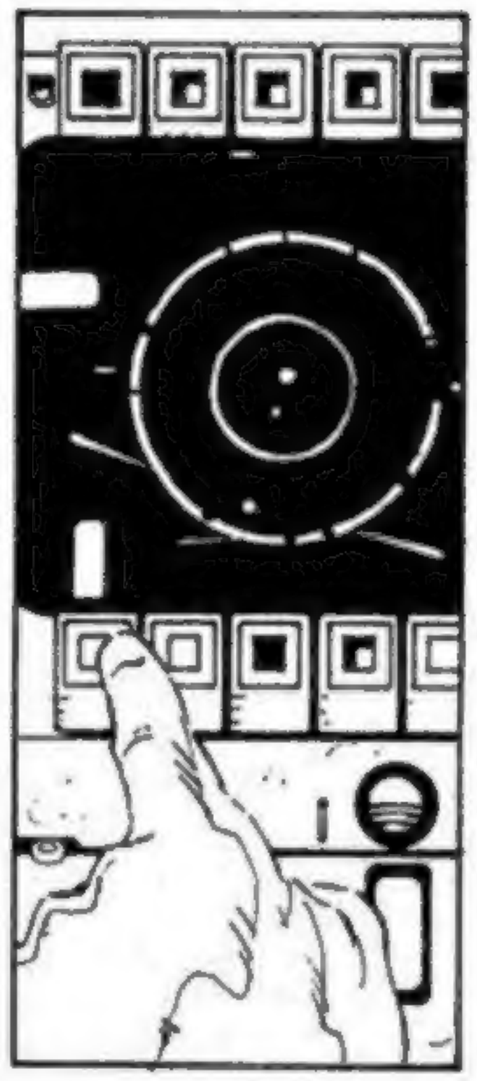
"...EXCEPT WHEN TERRAIN AND VISIBILITY DICTATE THE NEED FOR SMALL SECURITY DETACHMENTS TO THE FLANKS, IN WHICH CASE THE ADVANCE PARTY COMMANDER WILL DETAIL ONE PLATOON SERGEANT..."

AND SO ON.

DEATHLESS PROSE FROM STRIKE FORCE COMMAND SMALL UNIT LEADER'S HANDBOOK.



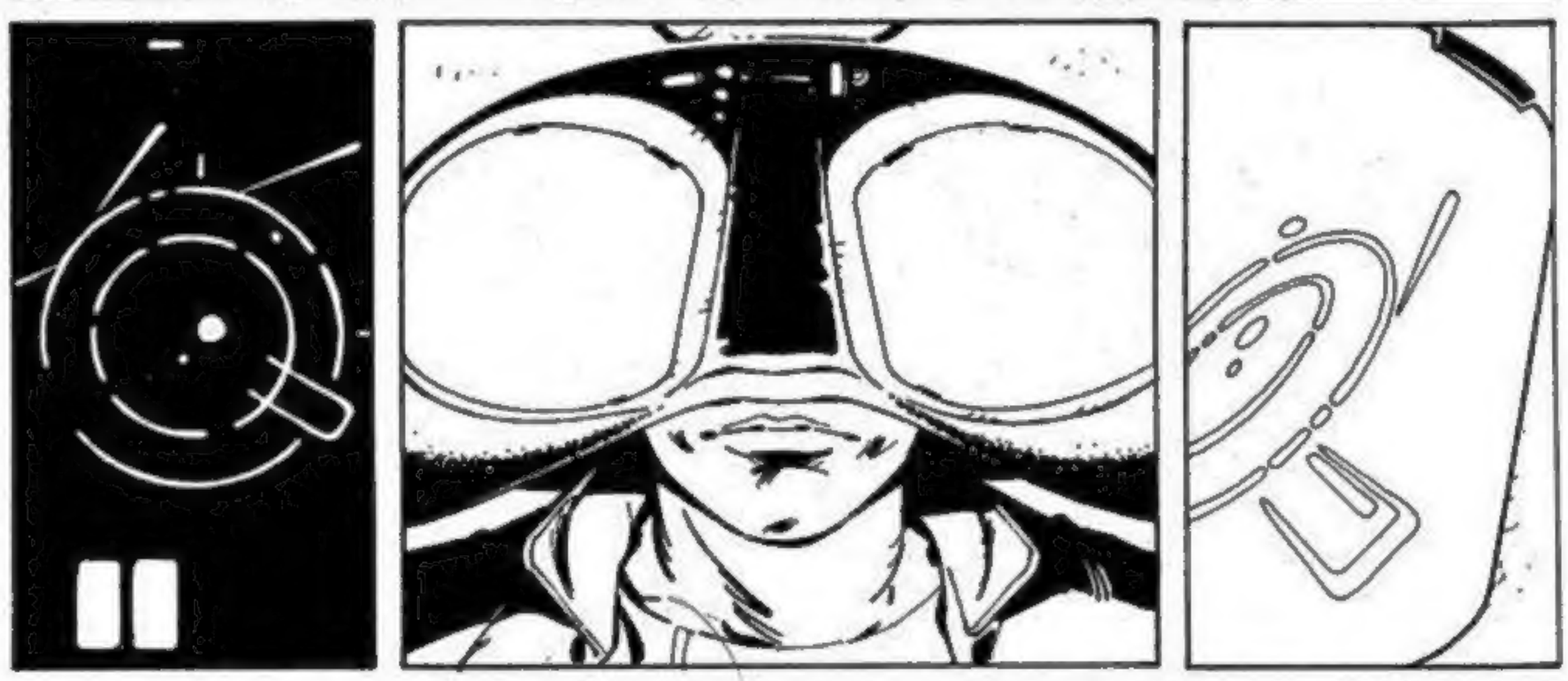
IF YOU WANT TO BECOME A THOROUGHLY ECLECTIC EXPERT ON A SUBJECT THAT DISGUSTS YOU, JOIN UNEF AND SIGN UP FOR OFFICER TRAINING.



I REMEMBER THAT EXPERIMENT IN HIGH SCHOOL BIOLOGY...

TAKE A FLATWORM AND TEACH IT HOW TO SWIM THROUGH A MAZE.

THEN MASH IT UP AND FEED IT TO A STUPID FLATWORM. SURPRISE! THE STUPID FLATWORM WILL BE ABLE TO SWIM THE MAZE, TOO.



ACTUALLY, I WAS JUST IMMERSED IN *ALSC*, THE ACCELERATED LIFE SITUATION COMPUTER...

THE ALSC TAUGHT ME THE ART (EXCUSE THE EXPRESSION) OF WAR, AS IT HAD BEEN PRACTICED BY HUNDREDS OF GENERATIONS.

NOT JUST INTELLECTUAL. I FELT EVERYTHING.

I FELT THE WEAPONS IN MY HANDS...

EL 955

EVERY KIND OF WEAPON, FROM THE SPEAR TO THE NUCLEAR BOMB.

AND I FELT THEIR EFFECTS, TOO.

YOU KNOW AT LEAST A THOUSAND WAYS TO KILL, WILLIAM...

CAPTAIN CHARLIE MOORE HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO ME AS MY EXEC., SECOND IN COMMAND. HE WAS A VETERAN OF THE AYIN-12 CAMPAIGN. HE'D LOST BOTH LEGS AND MORE, A LOT MORE. BUT YOU COULDN'T TELL. HE WAS ALL RIGHT. WE GOT PAST THE "MAJOR SIR" AND "CAPTAIN" BULLSHIT PRETTY FAST.

...BUT YOUR DOSSIER SAYS THAT IF YOU HAD TO KILL A MAN, RATHER THAN A TAURAN, YOU COULDN'T DO IT. EVEN IF YOU HAD TO.

YOU HAVE ACCESS TO MY DOSSIER, CHARLIE?

JOB PRIVILEGE. AS ORIENTATION AND MORALE OFFICER, I HAVE TO KNOW WHAT MAKES EACH PERSON TICK.

AH! COCKTAILS!

GLAD SOMEBODY DOES.

I WAS A LITTLE CURIOUS. WHAT ANIMAL ISN'T FASCINATED BY A MIRROR?

DOES IT SAY I WON'T MAKE A GOOD OFFICER? I TOLD THEM THAT FROM THE BEGINNING. I'M NO LEADER.

YOU HAVE A CERTAIN POTENTIAL. YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE SHOWS THAT YOU WOULD HAVE TO LEAD FROM EMPATHY, COMPASSION. A TEACHER OR A PREACHER. YOU WANT TO IMPOSE YOUR IDEAS ON PEOPLE, NOT YOUR WILL.

STARGATE MOVED BY BELOW US, WHILE THE MASARYK, OUR SPACE SHIP, ORIENTED ITSELF TOWARD THE GREATER MAGELLANIC CLOUD, WHERE MY UNIT WAS GOING TO DEFEND A CHUNK OF ROCK AGAINST SOME HYPOTHETICAL *TAURANS*.

STARGATE WAS JUST A CHUNK OF ROCK WHEN I WAS DRAFTED INTO THE ARMY. NOW IT WAS A CITY BIGGER THAN NEW YORK.

THE U.N.E.F. MUST HAVE KNOWN THIS BEFORE PROMOTING ME TO MAJOR!

SURE. BUT YOU HAVE TOO MANY YEARS OF SERVICE TO STAY AN ENLISTED MAN OR AN NCO.

TIME PARADOX DUE TO COLLAPSAR JUMPS. I ONLY HAVE THREE CAMPAIGNS TO MY CREDIT.

501

THAT'S TWO AND A HALF MORE THAN THE AVERAGE SOLDIER SURVIVES. BESIDES, YOU'RE ADAPTABLE, REASONABLY INTELLIGENT, ANALYTICAL...

...AND YOU'RE ONE OF THE ELEVEN PEOPLE WHO HAVE SURVIVED THE WHOLE WAR. THE PROPAGANDA BOYS WILL PROBABLY MAKE YOU INTO SOME KIND OF FOLK HERO.

CHARLIE, I'M A MEDIOCRE SOLDIER WITH ONLY ONE TALENT: THE BULLET WITH MY NAME ON IT KEEPS MISSING ME.

WELL, *um*...THAT'S NOT THE ONLY THING THAT'S STRANGE ABOUT *YOU*, WILLIAM...

YES, I'M 482 YEARS OLD!

THAT'S NOT EXACTLY IT. YOU'RE HETEROSEXUAL!

BIG DEAL. I'M TOLERANT.

YOUR PROFILE SAYS YOU THINK YOU ARE. BUT YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD...OTHERS...

WAIT A MINUTE... YOU MEAN THAT... ON BOARD...

...EVERYONE ON THE SHIP IS HOMOSEXUAL?

WILLIAM, EVERYONE ON EARTH IS HOMOSEXUAL!

...EXCEPT SOME VETERANS AND A HANDFUL OF INCURABLES...

THEY WEREN'T GOING TO CURE ME!

REALLY...

SO YOU ARE TOO?

ME? NO...

BUT I'M NO LONGER HETERO, EITHER.

MASARYK

FROM FEET TO HIPS, I'M MADE OF METAL AND PLASTIC. CAN'T REGENERATE. DISORDER OF THE LYMPHATIC SYSTEM.

I THOUGHT FOR SEVERAL SECONDS...

I WAS SIPPING A COCKTAIL IN THE YEAR 2471 ABOARD A STARSHIP IN THE COMPANY OF AN ASEXUAL CYBORG...

WHO'S THE ONLY OTHER *NORMAL* PERSON ON THE PLANET.

"FAR OUT," MY OLD MOTHER WOULD'VE SAID.

THEY ALL LOOKED NORMAL ENOUGH, THOUGH THEY ALL VAGUELY RESEMBLED ONE ANOTHER...

ATTENTION! I AM LIEUTENANT HILLEBOE. AND I'M YOUR SECOND FIELD OFFICER...

JARVIS

THE RESULT OF GENETIC MANIPULATION.

TEST-TUBE WARRIORS, EVERY ONE...

GRAUBARD

...BORN WITHOUT MOTHERS, CONCEIVED IN A PETRI DISH...

THAT USED TO BE "FIELD FIRST SERGEANT." WHEN AN ARMY'S BEEN AROUND TOO LONG, IT GETS TOP-HEAVY WITH OFFICERS.

HILLEBOE

MANDELLA

THE FOOTSOLDIERS WERE DRAFTED FOR TEN YEARS, A DEATH SENTENCE. YOUR CHANCE OF SURVIVAL WAS TWO ONE-THOUSANDS OF ONE PERCENT.

IT WAS LIKE PLAYING RUSSIAN ROULETTE WITH BULLETS IN FOUR OF THE SIX CHAMBERS...

JARVIS

KAHN

DE SOLA

IBANDA

FOX

ZEELAND

IF YOU CAN PULL THE TRIGGER TEN TIMES WITHOUT DECORATING THE OPPOSITE WALL, CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'RE A CIVILIAN.

MANDELLA

GOOD LUCK.

MAJOR MANDELLA IS GOING TO GIVE YOU YOUR COMBAT ORDERS, MAJOR?...

MANDELLA

HILLEBOE

I HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS AND SOME BAD NEWS.

A FEW CENTURIES AGO, THIS HAD BEEN A JOKE. NOW IT WAS A STATEMENT OF FACT.

WE'RE GOING TO SADE-138, WHERE WE'LL BUILD A BASE AND WAIT UNTIL WE'RE RELIEVED. TWO OR THREE YEARS. DURING THAT TIME WE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE ATTACKED

SADE-138 WILL BE THE MOST DISTANT OUTPOST OF THE WAR. WE'RE GOING THAT DISTANCE BECAUSE INTELLIGENCE IS CERTAIN THAT THE TAURANS WANT IT.

COMMODORE ANTOPOL COMMANDED THE MASARYK AND ITS CREW...

THE GREATER MAGELLANIC CLOUD IS ABOUT 150,000 LIGHT YEARS FROM STARGATE...

NOT THAT IT WOULD MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE. MARYGAY WAS AS GOOD AS DEAD, AND THERE WASN'T ANOTHER PERSON LEFT ALIVE WHO MEANT ANYTHING TO ME.

WE MUST MAKE FIVE COLLAPSAR JUMPS TO REACH SADE-138.

THIS VOYAGE WILL LAST ABOUT FOUR SUBJECTIVE MONTHS AND THREE HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS ON THE REAL CALENDAR...

IF I LIVED TO RETURN, THEN I'D BE SOME SEVEN CENTURIES OLDER...

THE

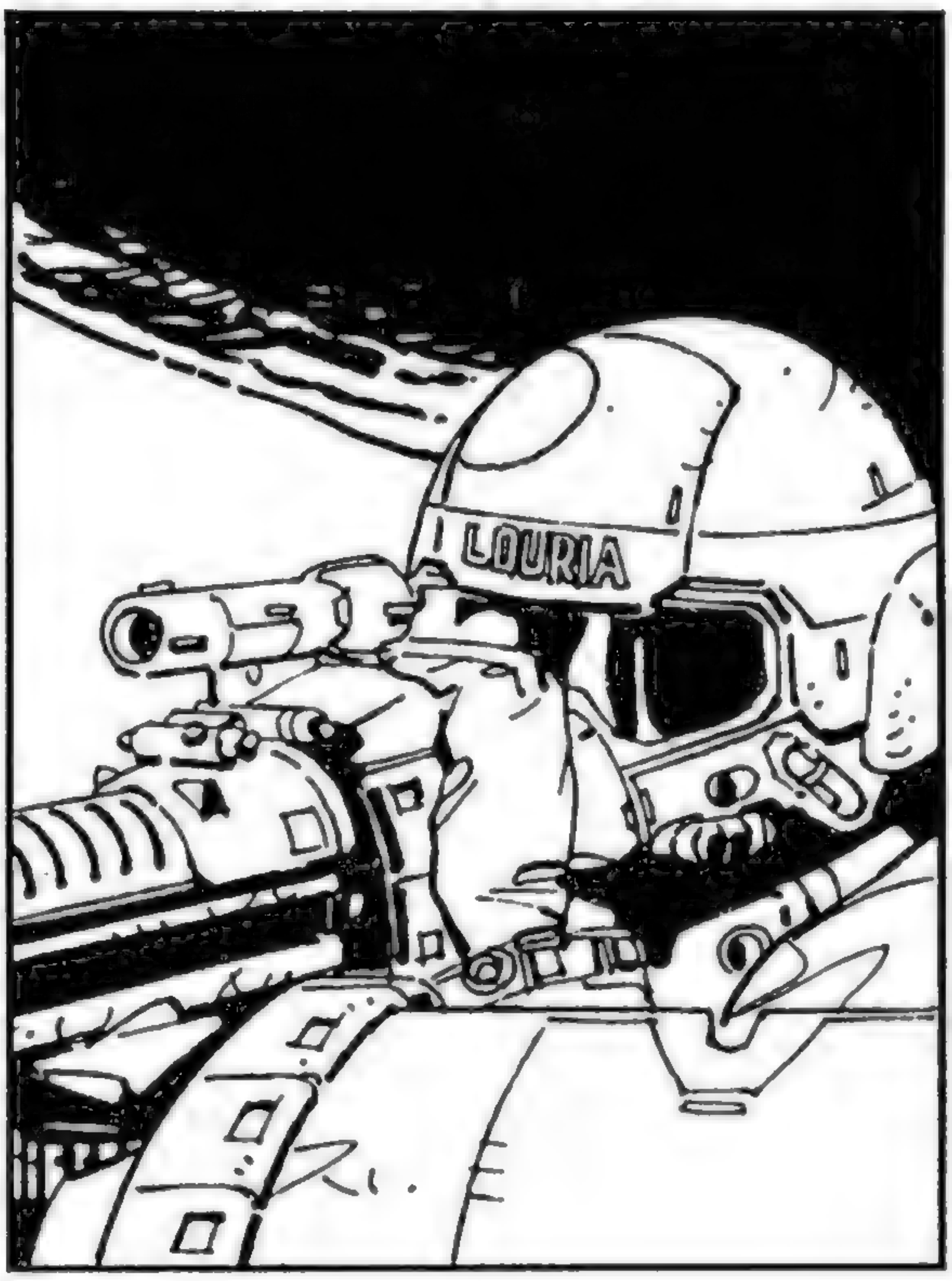
FOREVER WAR

Book Three

By

HALDEMAN

& MARVANO



Chapter Two

THERE'S ALSO THIS...

NEW TAURAN FIGHTER, THE KIND WE'LL PROBABLY RUN INTO AT SADE-138...

BE NICE IF WE GET THERE FIRST. TIME TO DIG IN AND SET OUT DEFENSES.

MANDELLA

GOMM

WHAT THE HELL IS IT?

BE NICER IF WE DIDN'T GOAT ALL.

INSPECTING THE ARMORY DIDN'T MAKE ME ANY MORE ENTHUSIASTIC...

MAJ

EVERYTHING IN ORDER, LIEUTENANT?

DANGER RADIATION!

YES, MAJOR, EXCEPT FOR THOSE DAMN SWORDS. THERE'S NO WAY TO ORIENT THEM SO THEY WON'T BEND UNDER ACCELERATION. HOPE THEY DON'T BREAK.

2LT

THE SWORDS WERE FOR USE IN THE *STASIS FIELD*. I COULDN'T PRETEND TO UNDERSTAND IT...

THE GAP BETWEEN PRESENT-DAY PHYSICS AND MY ANCIENT DEGREE IN IT WAS AS LONG AS THE TIME THAT SEPARATED GALILEO AND EINSTEIN.

INSIDE THE FIELD, NOTHING CAN GO FASTER THAN 16.3 METERS PER SECOND. NO MAGNETIC FIELD CAN WORK THERE. NO ELECTRICITY, NO LIGHT TRANSMISSION...

...WHICH MEANS THAT NO MODERN WEAPON OF WAR CAN FUNCTION THERE!

MA.II

THUS THE SWORDS, LANCES AND SHIELDS-- AND PROTECTIVE SUITS. WITHOUT THEM, YOUR BRAIN AND HEART WOULD STOP INSTANTLY. FIVE TIMES, THE STASIS FIELD GAVE US PURE VICTORY; TAURANS WIPED OUT AND NO HUMAN CASUALTIES. ON THE SIXTH TRY, THE TAURANS THEMSELVES HAD ADAPTIVE SUITS AND CARRIED ARCHAIC, EFFECTIVE WEAPONS.

M PVT

WE HADN'T HEARD FROM THE OTHER UNITS WITH STASIS FIELDS. SOME WERE SUPPOSED TO BE ON THEIR WAY BACK TO STARGATE; SOME WERE PROBABLY IN COMBAT...

OR MAYBE THEY'D ALL BEEN EXTERMINATED. NO WAY TO TELL.

STARGATE--RESH-10...OUR FIRST COLLAPSAR JUMP...

...AND THE FIRST CONFINEMENT IN THE ACCELERATION TANKS.

RESH-10--KAPH-35...
KAPH-35--SAMK-78...

LIFE ABOARD THE MASARYK ALTERNATED BETWEEN UNCONSCIOUSNESS AND MORTAL BOREDOM...

BORN BY ACCIDENT!
MAJOR SHIT-FOR-BRAINS YOU SHIT!
IN 3RD GRADE!
HE TERMINATE STEMEHAM
HA! Life's a Bitch!
IF YOU CAN WRITE YOUR NAME YOU CAN BE AN officer
KILROY PEED HERE

I VOLUNTARILY CLOSED MY EYES WHEN RUDKOSKI, THE COOK'S ASSISTANT, IMPROVISED A SECRET DISTILLERY. I DIDN'T CARE AS LONG AS PEOPLE SHOWED UP FOR DUTY SOBER.

RUDKOSKI

BUT I DID HAVE TO WONDER HOW THIS BUSINESS WORKED IN OUR SEALED-TIGHT ECOLOGY. I ASKED DOCTOR ALSEVER TO LOOK INTO IT. SHE ASKED JARVAL, WHO ASKED CARRERAS, WHO SAT DOWN WITH ORBAN, THE COOK.

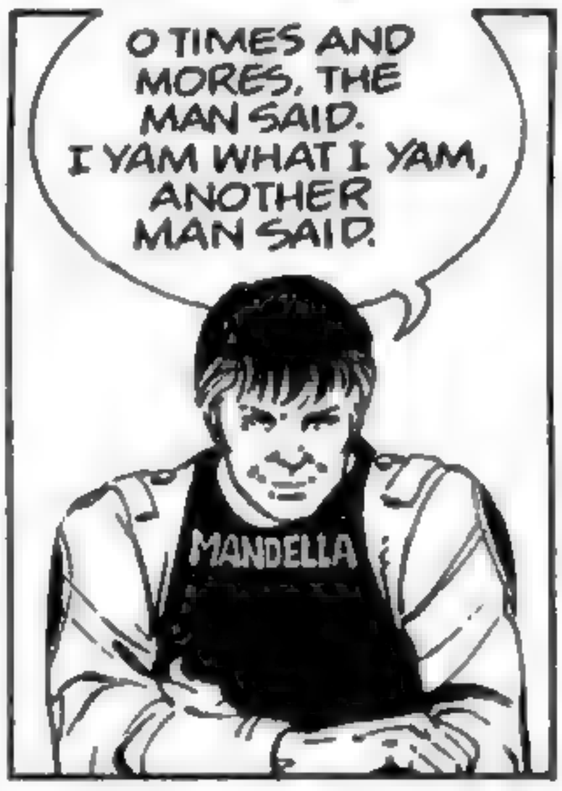
THEY USE THE SUGAR FROM DESSERT.

REAL RUDKOSKI

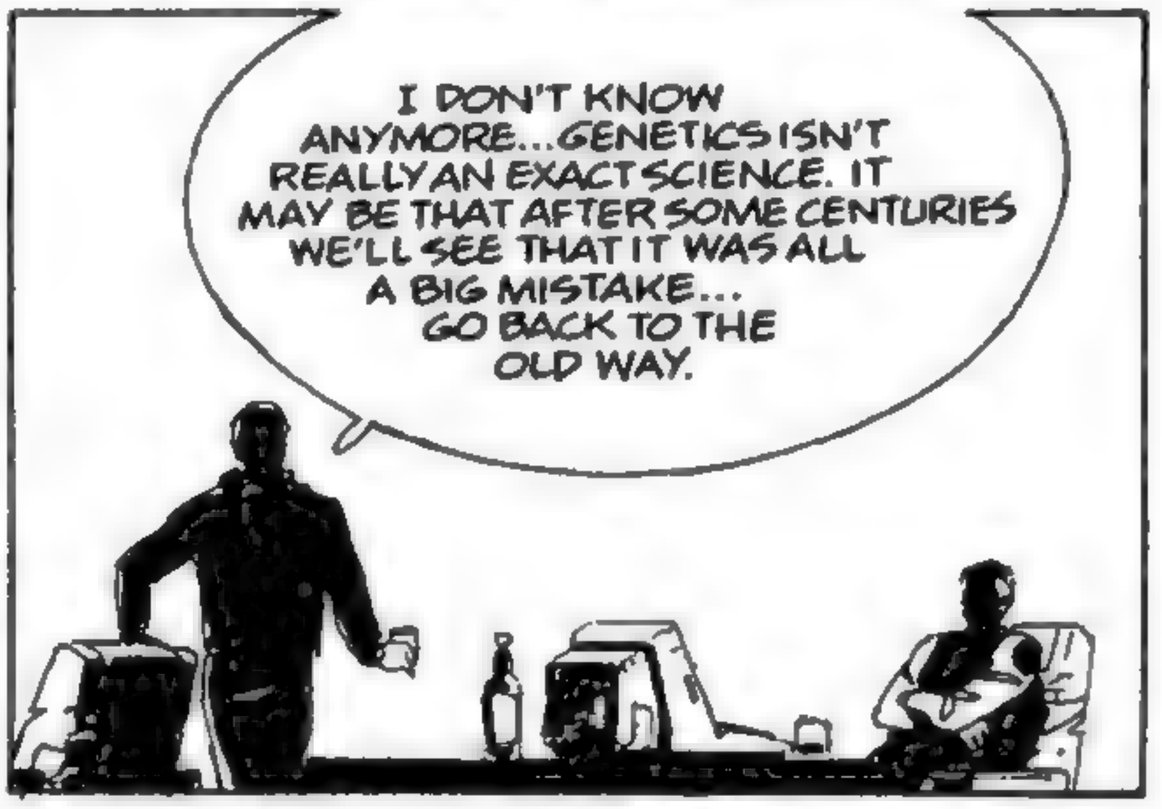
ALMOST NOBODY EATS DESSERT. THEY LEAVE IT ON THEIR TRAY AND IT WINDS UP IN RUDKOSKI'S VACUUM STILL.

ALSEVER HAD SUCCEEDED IN GETTING HER HANDS ON A BOTTLE OF RUDKOSKI'S FINEST. SHE'D FINISHED HALF OF IT.

BECAUSE I'M HETERO? IT'S PERFECTLY NATURAL, DIANA.
SO IS SWINGING THROUGH THE TREES. DIGGING FOR ROOTS AND BERRIES. PROGRESS, MAJOR! YOU HAVE TO CHANGE WITH THE TIMES.



EUGENIC CONTROL. PEOPLE USED TO SHOW A REGRETTABLE LACK OF SENSE IN CHOOSING THEIR GENETIC PARTNER.
YOU THINK THE GOVERNMENT HAS MORE SENSE?


I DON'T KNOW ANYMORE... GENETICS ISN'T REALLY AN EXACT SCIENCE. IT MAY BE THAT AFTER SOME CENTURIES WE'LL SEE THAT IT WAS ALL A BIG MISTAKE... GO BACK TO THE OLD WAY.

AS A WOMAN, I HOPE NOT! CHILDBIRTH. HAVING A MAN... INSIDE...

SHIT! DRANK TOO MUCH... LIE DOWN... 'FORE I FALL DAWN...

MANDELLA

OKAY, WILLIAM... YOUR ONLY CHANCE...

CHRIST'S SAKE, DIANA. IT WOULDN'T BE FAIR.

MANDELLA

ALL'S FAIR. 'SIDES, I'M A DOCTOR. BE CLIN'CAL ABOUT IT. CURIOUS.

MAYBE IT WOULDN'T...

...BE SO BAD...

...AT ALL...

I CALLED CHARLIE TO HELP ME CARRY HER TO HER CABIN...

DEAR SWEET DIANA, LATENT HETEROSEXUAL... I'LL BUY YOU A BOTTLE OF GOOD SCOTCH NEXT TIME WE COME INTO PORT...

SIX OR SEVEN CENTURIES FROM NOW...

GOOD GRIEF! WHAT IS IT? VARNISH? YOU GUYS REALLY DRANK THAT STUFF?!

CAREFUL WITH THAT BOTTLE, CHARLIE... IT MIGHT EXPLODE IF YOU SHAKE IT UP TOO MUCH!

THE LONGEST COLLAPSAR JUMP IN HUMAN HISTORY... NO TELLING ABOUT NON-HUMAN...

MAJOR MANDELLA, WE'VE ESTABLISHED OUR ORBIT OUTSIDE THE PLANET'S RINGS..

MANDELLA

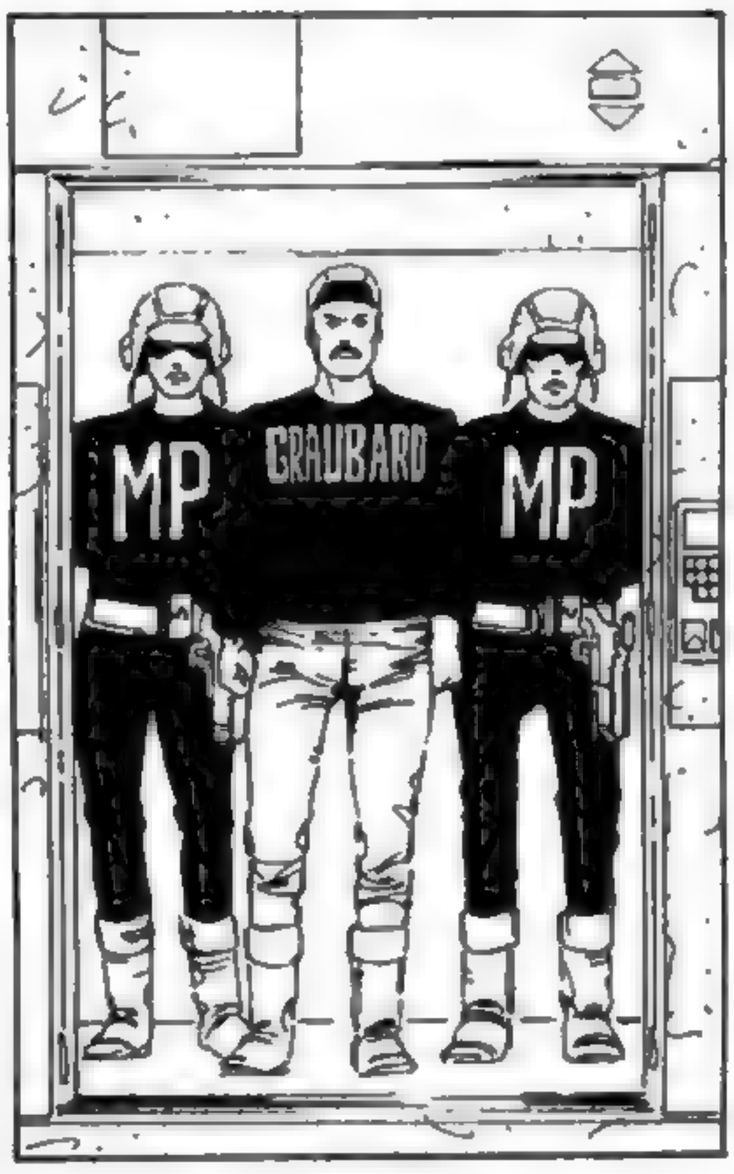
OKAY. SEE YOU AFTER THE PARTY.

GOOD LUCK, MAJOR.

IT WAS AN ARID, LIFELESS WORLD. BUT NO TAURANS.

I LOOKED THE OTHER WAY WHEN RUDKOSKI REASSEMBLED HIS STILL ON THE NEW BASE... BUT BOREDOM AND STRESS BEGAN TO AFFECT THE TROOPS...

AFTER FIVE MONTHS OF RELATIVELY COMFORTABLE ROUTINE A CERTAIN PRIVATE GRAUBARD ACTED UP...



GRAUBARD HAD ALMOST KILLED HIS EX-LOVER WHEN HE TOOK UP WITH ANOTHER MAN...

MP

MP

GRAUBARD

AFTER TWO WEEK'S CONFINEMENT, ATTACKED HIM AGAIN, EVEN MORE SERIOUSLY.

LET'S JUST PUT HIM OUT THE AIRLOCK, WILLIAM... WITHOUT A SPACESUIT, NATURALLY. HE'S A DANGEROUS ANIMAL.

FOX

WE WERE AT WAR. I DID HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXECUTE THE TROUBLE-MAKER, BUT THAT SEEMED EXCESSIVE TO ME. I PREFERRED TO SEND HIM UP TO THE *MASARYK*'S BRIG; WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY REAL FACILITIES TO DEAL WITH HIM...

I DON'T PLAY THAT GAME, CHARLIE...

I CAN'T CONDEMN A GUY TO DEATH JUST BECAUSE HE'S...

GRAUBARD

WILLIAM! WATCH...

DIE, OLD QUEER!

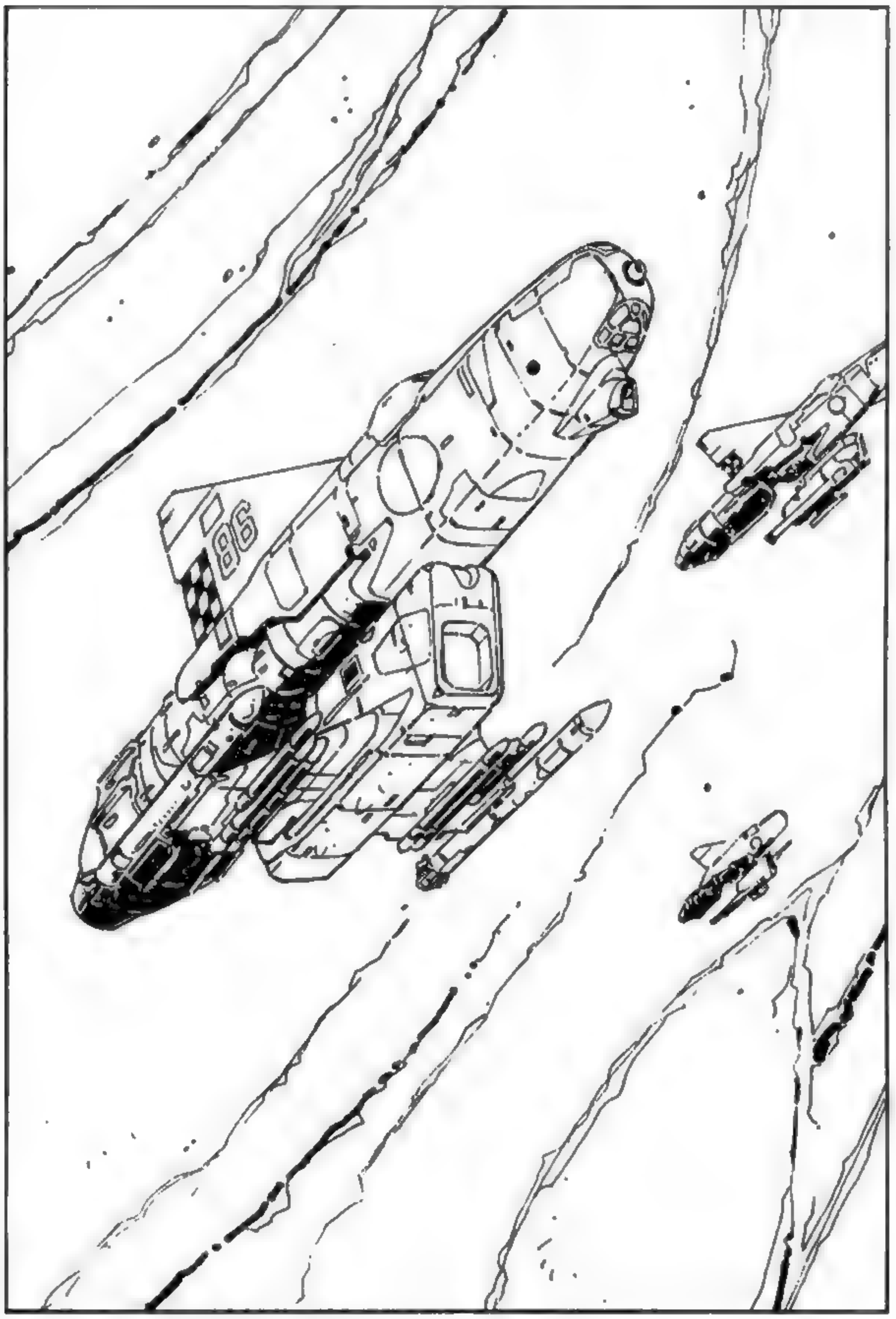
THE FOREVER WAR

Book Three

By

JOE HALDEMAN

& MARVANO



Chapter Three

THE IDIOT HAD TAKEN IT INTO HIS HEAD TO KILL ME...

"YOU KNOW AT LEAST A THOUSAND WAYS TO KILL."

"YOU WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE ABLE TO KILL A MAN, EVEN IF YOU HAD TO," CHARLIE HAD SAID AN ETERNITY AGO...

WILLIAM!

DIE!

HE DIDN'T SEEM TO REALIZE THAT THE OLD QUEER WAS ONLY FIVE *REAL* YEARS OLDER THAN HE WAS, AND HAD PERFECTLY HONED COMBAT REFLEXES...

DON'T MOVE, SOLDIER!

WHACK

YOU SHOULD HAVE FINISHED HIM OFF, MAJOR! LET'S NOT WASTE ANY MORE TIME!

DE SOLA

KAHN

WHAT?...

MANDELLA

LET ME TAKE CARE OF HIM!

NOW!!

LIEUTENANT HILLEBOE...

ESCORT THE PRISONER BACK TO CONFINEMENT. DISMISSED.

MANDELLA

YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXECUTE HIM YOURSELF. DETAIL SOMEONE ELSE TO DO IT.

I WOULD LOOK LIKE A COWARD TO DELEGATE THIS.

...

IF IT'S SO DAMNED COMPLICATED, JUST TELL THEM THAT. THEN HAVE THEM DRAW STRAWS.

WHY NOT? THE MARXIST *POUM* MILITIA IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR WORKED THAT WAY. AN ORDER WAS ONLY FOLLOWED AFTER IT WAS EXPLAINED IN DETAIL AND APPROVED; YOU COULD REFUSE IT IF IT DIDN'T MAKE SENSE.

A

FROM MY ALSC TRAINING, IT'S AS IF I REMEMBER BEING THERE MYSELF. OFFICERS AND MEN GOT DRUNK TOGETHER...

MANDELLA

THEY NEVER SALUTED OR USED TITLES...

THEY LOST THE WAR!

MANDELLI

FU

TRUE. BUT THE OTHER SIDE DIDN'T HAVE ANY FUN.

MAJOR!

MOORE

ILLEBOE

MAJOR, EVEN IF IT HAD WORKED THEN, IT WOULDN'T WORK NOW. THE TROOPS EXPECT AND RESPECT DECISIVENESS. ACTION!

I DON'T KNOW. I SORT OF LIKE THE PART ABOUT...

EXIT

MANDELLI

FOX

HILLEBOE

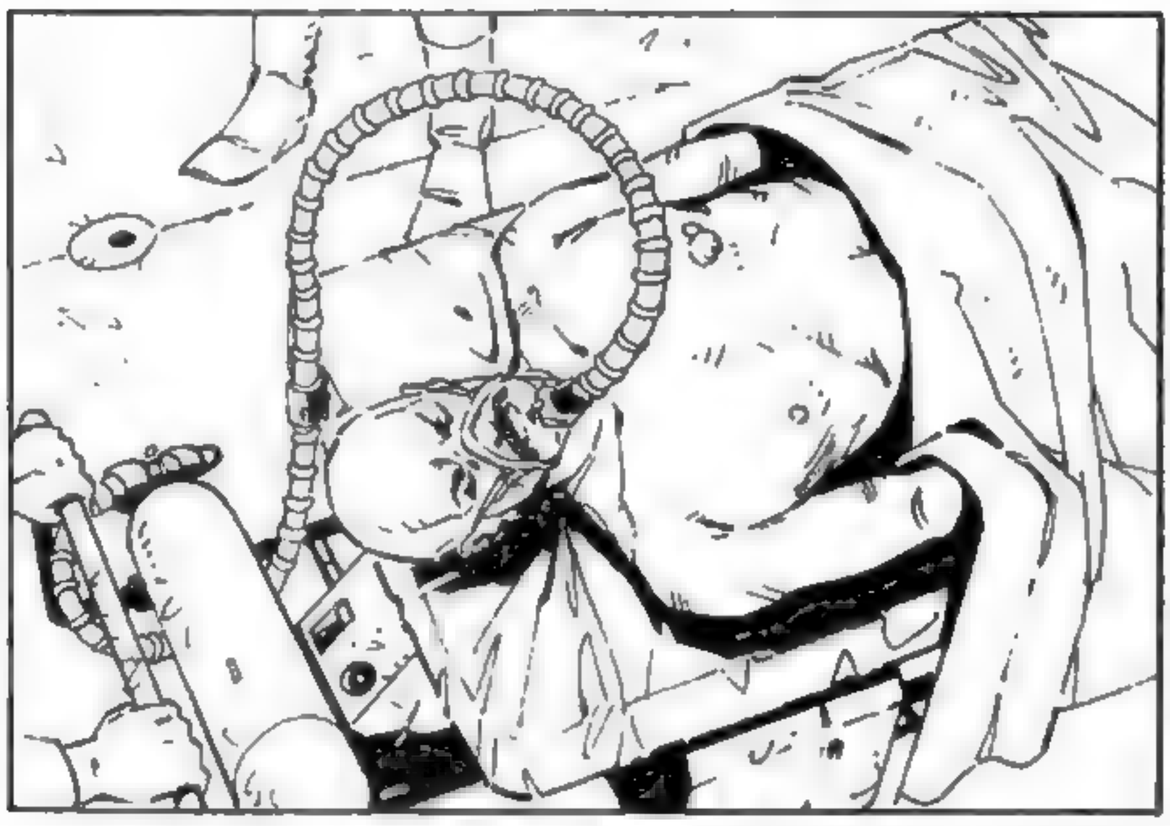
FOX! ALSEVER HERE! PREPARE THE CARDIAC UNIT! QUICK!

DIANA! WHO...?

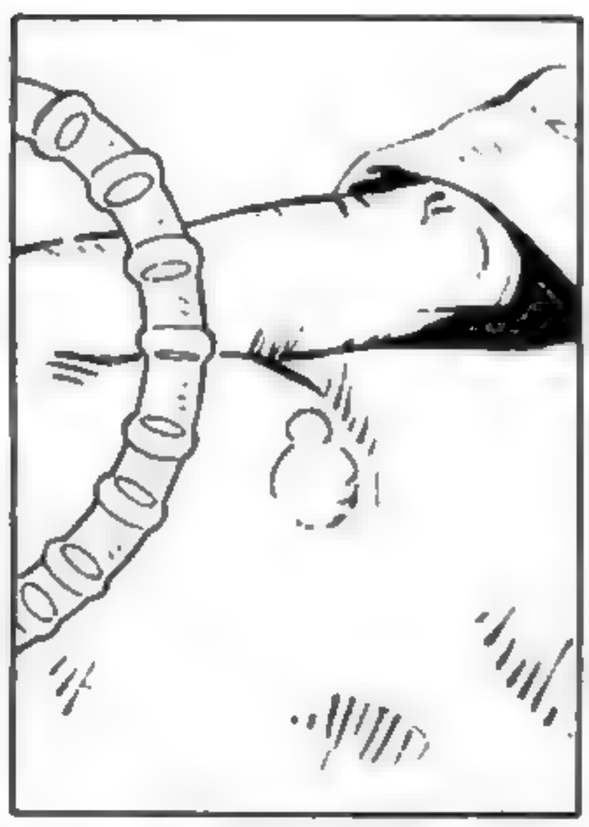
GRAUBARD... HE TRIED TO COMMIT SUICIDE. HIS HEART'S STOPPED BEATING...

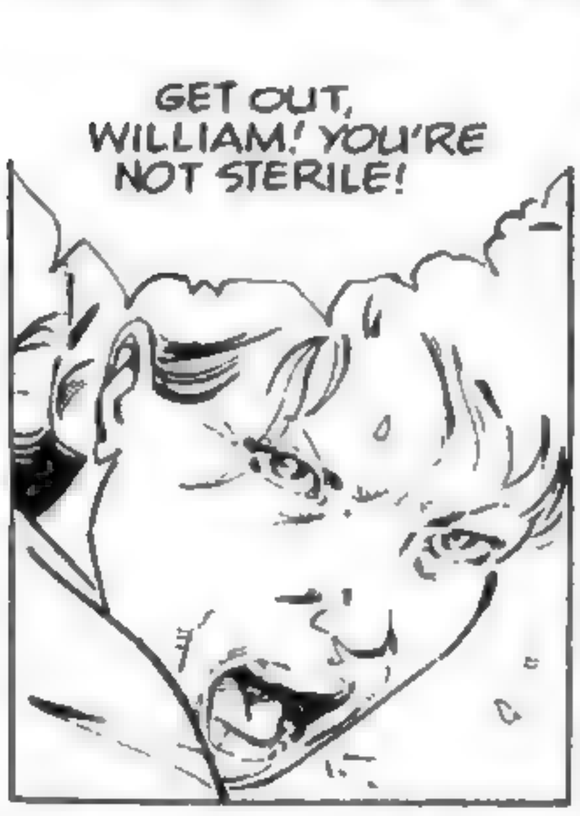
GANGWAY! GANGWAY!

EXIT

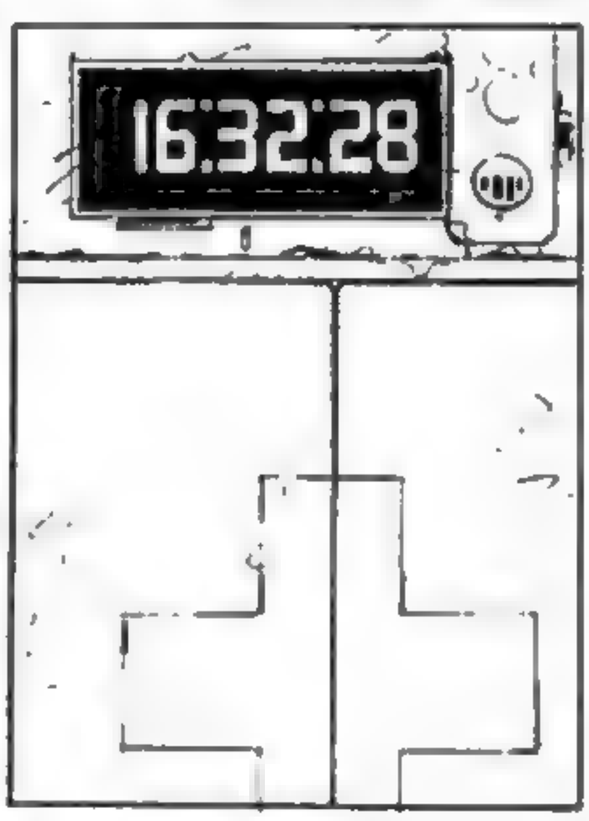


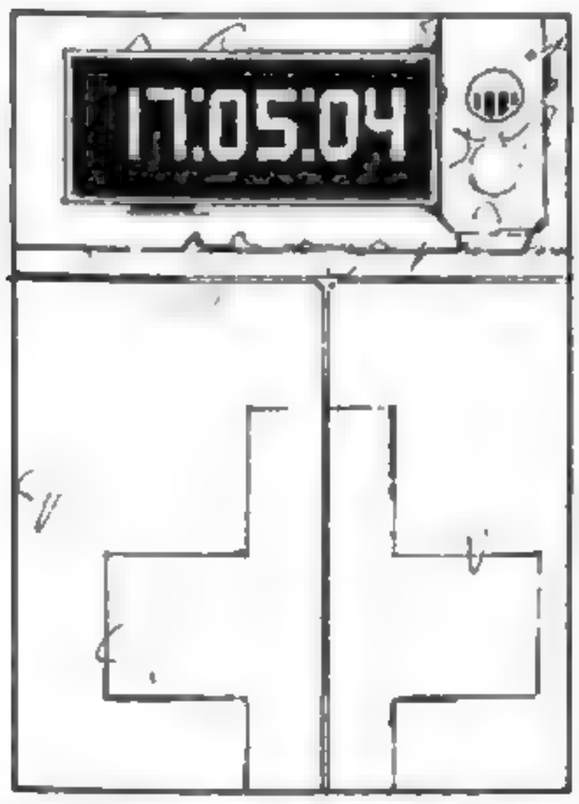
NDEI

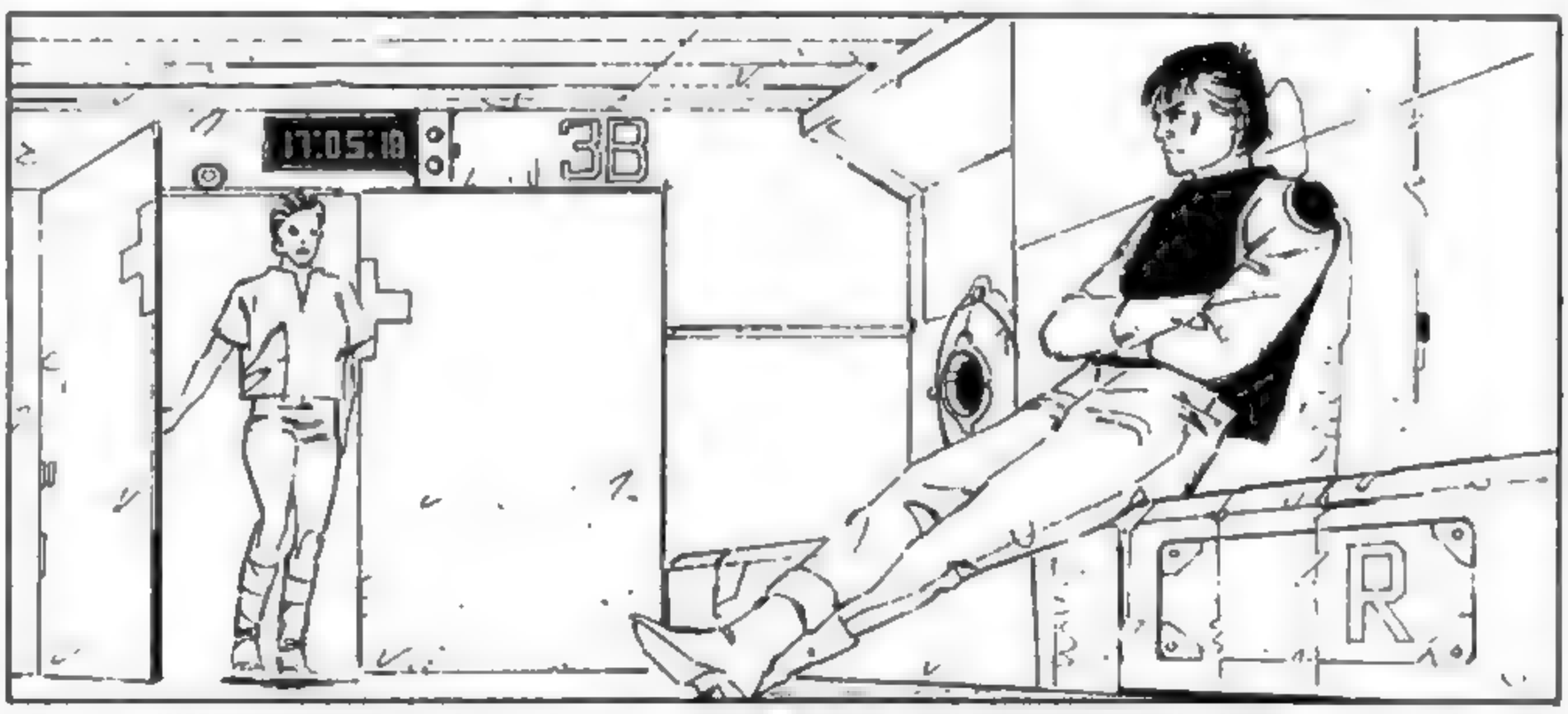



GET OUT, WILLIAM! YOU'RE NOT STERILE!

OKAY, FOX. LET'S CRACK THE CHEST.
16 32:20
3B
MOORE
MANDELLA


16:32:28


17:05:04


17:05:18
3B
R

HE'S DEAD.

WHAT HAPPENED?
HE HANGED HIMSELF WITH HIS BELT.
MANDELLA

DIANA...

I DIDN'T SEE ANY MARK ON HIS NECK.

HE DIDN'T DIE OF STRANGULATION. HE DIED OF CARDIAC ARREST.

THAT BLOOD BRUISE HE HAD... RIGHT OVER HIS HEART.

MANDELA

EPINEPHRINE INJECTION. I TRIED TO BRING HIM BACK TO LIFE.

BUT THAT TYPE OF BRUISE ONLY APPEARS IF THE PATIENT FLINCHES AWAY FROM THE INJECTION.

HE WAS ALREADY DEAD WHEN YOU GAVE HIM THE SHOT?

NO PULSE, NO RESPIRATION, NO HEARTBEAT... I'D SAY DEAD.

VERY FEW OTHER DISORDERS SHOW THESE SYMPTOMS.

THAT SAVES ME A LOT OF TROUBLE...

THAT'S TRUE.

ATTENTION! CALL FOR THE MAJOR! ECHELON 1!

ECHELON 1?!... THAT'S...

ANTOPOL! I THINK WE HAVE COMPANY...

MANDELLA

THEY JUST EMERGED FROM SADE-138, MAJOR. TWO CRUISERS AND AT LEAST EIGHT FIGHTERS.

01 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

TWO CRUISERS ?!...

WHAT'S THE E.T.A.?

ABOUT ELEVEN DAYS.

I'VE SENT TEN FIGHTERS TO INTERCEPT THEM. THE OTHER FOUR ARE COVERING THE MASARYK...

...AND YOU GROUNDHOGS DOWN THERE.

81 82 83 85 8 90 88

WE SPENT THE TEN DAYS FOLLOWING THE SYMBOLS THAT FLOATED ON OUR SCREENS...

MOORE

AND OUTSIDE, IF YOU KNEW WHERE TO LOOK, YOU COULD SEE TINY POINTS OF LIGHT MOVING THROUGH THE DARK SKY...

TARGET WITHIN RANGE

186

A SLOW AND SILENT BALLET, FROM THIS DISTANCE...

86 TO MASARYK! I HAVE TWO MISSILES BEHIND ME! MANEUVER TO DISENGAGE!

186

186

THE COMPUTER CALCULATED OUR CHANCES OF SURVIVAL, DEPENDING ON HOW MANY ENEMY VESSELS SURVIVED TO ATTACK THE BASE...

ENEMY CRUISERS	ENEMY FIGHTERS	PROBABILITY OF SURVIVAL
2	0-5	<0.01
	5-10	<0.02
	10-15	<0.03
	15-20	<0.03
	20-25	<0.04
	25-30	<0.04
	30-35	<0.06
	35-40	0.43
	40-45	0.59
	45-50	0.72
	50-55	0.91
	55-60	0.99
	60	1.00

THESE FIGURES ASSUME THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO SACRIFICE ALL YOUR FIGHTERS

ALL OUR FIGHTERS WERE THROWN INTO THE BATTLE.

CALL FROM ECHELON 1.

MANDELLA HERE.

I'M LEAVING THE LIFE BOAT IN ORBIT FOR YOU, MAJOR.

ANTOPOL

WE'LL HAVE TO THROW THE MASARYK INTO THE BATTLE.

IT'S A SLIM CHANCE. I'M AFRAID IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE.

ANTOPOL

THAT BAD?

ANDELLA

...

GOODBYE, MAJOR.

ANTOPOL

GOODBYE, COMMODORE.

ANDELLA

THERE WAS ROOM FOR FIFTEEN PEOPLE IN THE LIFEBOAT... FIFTEEN PEOPLE TO CHOOSE OUT OF A HUNDRED.

80

INSERT CODE
80 : MASARYK

80

MASARYK

407

2

WILLIAM! THE MASARYK TOOK OUT ONE OF THE CRUISERS!

12

TARGET WITHIN RANGE

12

E

01

WHAT THE HELL ARE THOSE LITTLE BLIPS?

I DON'T KNOW... NOT FIGHTERS, ANYWAY...

15 14 12 13 11

INSERT COIN
11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18
TROOP CARRIERS

TROOP TRANSPORTS! LOOKS LIKE IT'S OUR TURN.

ATTENTION! MAJOR MANDELLA HERE...

CALLING MYSELF "MAJOR" STILL SOUNDED RIDICULOUS.

LIEUTENANT HILLEBOE, PLAN A. EVERY PLATOON TO THEIR PERIMETER STATIONS. MAXIMUM ARMOR BACKUP!

JUST A SECOND, WILLIAM. NOT EVERYONE... LET'S FEEL THEM OUT, FIRST.

RIGHT... LET THE ENEMY UNDERESTIMATE OUR NUMBER. KEEP A RESERVE.

PLATOONS A AND C TOOK POSITION OUTSIDE. B AND THE COMMAND PLATOON STAYED ON ALERT INSIDE THE BASE.

WE ARE GOING TO ENGAGE OUR AERIAL SCOUTS AGAINST THEIR TRANSPORTS, BUT KEEP ONE IN SAFETY, THERE... IF IT TURNS BAD, IT WILL BE OUR LAST TRUMP.

THE TAURAN TRANSPORTS ARE ENTERING THE ATMOSPHERE.

MANDELLA TO SCOUTS! BEARING 135, RANGE ABOUT 30 KLICKS.

BASE TO SCOUTS 1 THROUGH 4... VISUAL CONTACT IN SIX SECONDS.

GOT 'EM!

THE
FOREVER WAR
Book Three

By
HALDEMAN
& MARVANO

Chapter Four

SCOUT 4 REPORTING. ONE TRANSPORT ELIMINATED.

FIGHTER ESCORT COMING AROUND! SCOUT 4, YOU HAVE ONE OF THEM BEHIND YOU!

THE TRANSPORTS ARE ALL OVER OUR PERIMETER, MAJOR! THEY'RE LANDING!

SHIT! SHIT! SHIT!

WILLIAM! THE MASARYK IS CAUGHT IN A CROSSFIRE!

STAY COOL! COVER YOUR FIELD OF FIRE!

ANTOPOL IS HEADED STRAIGHT TOWARD THE TAURAN CRUISER!

WHAT'S SHE TRYING TO DO, DAMN IT?

A KAMIKAZE OPERATION! SHE'S TRYING TO NEUTRALIZE IT!

101

80

THAT'LL NEVER SUCCEED! FIVE MISSILES ARE ABOUT TO REACH HER!

THE MASARYK IS CLOSE TO THE ENEMY. IF IT EXPLODES CLOSE ENOUGH, THE ELECTROMAGNETIC SHOCK WAVE CAN NEUTRALIZE THE CRUISER, SEND IT OUT OF CONTROL.

ANTOPOL'S PLAN PARTIALLY SUCCEEDED... THE ENEMY BOMBS PULVERIZED THE MASARYK AT THE EDGE OF THE CRUISER'S FORCE FIELD...

THE LUMBERING MASTODON SPIRALED IN TOWARD OUR PLANET.

IT CRASHED WITH ALL ITS NOVA BOMBS, OR WHATEVER TOOK THEIR PLACE WITH OUR ADVERSARIES. THE EXPLOSION PRODUCED TWENTY TIMES MORE ENERGY THAN THE MOST POWERFUL TERRESTRIAL EARTHQUAKE.

ON A PLANET BARELY TWO-THIRDS THE SIZE OF EARTH.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KNOW MUCH GEOLOGY TO FIGURE OUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT.

LORD!... ORDER EVERYONE TOPSIDE! QUICK! THERE'S GOING TO BE AN EARTHQUAKE!

ARE WE REALLY SAFER HERE, WILLIAM?

HILLEBOE! WHERE'S PLATOON B? IN A FEW MINUTES, THE BASE IS GOING TO FALL IN ON THEIR HEADS!

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE KEEP THEM IN RESERVE. I ORDERED THEM TO STAY. THEY'LL BE SAFE ENOUGH--

YOU ORDERED THEM?! THEY'LL ALL DIE! A RICHTER NINE--

MANDELLA

I DON'T THINK...

LIFE AND DEATH ARE SIMPLY A MATTER OF LUCK.

NO ONE COULD HAVE SURVIVED OUTSIDE OF OUR STASIS FIELD...

...WHICH I FELL INTO LIKE A LAKE.

DON'T SHOOT! IT'S ONE OF OURS!

OTHERS HAD ALREADY FOUND REFUGE THERE...

CHARLIE? DIANA?

WILLIAM?!

OUR TRANSPORT HAD BEEN IN THE AIR. IF THERE WAS ANYONE ALIVE OUTSIDE, THEY WERE TAURANS.

FOX! DESOLA! KAYIBANDA! TAKE THE NOVA BOMB FROM THE SCOUT AND CARRY IT TO THE EDGE OF THE STASIS FIELD!

AND THEN, WILLIAM?

WE TRIGGER THE BOMB. IT CAN'T DETONATE IN HERE. THEN WE ROLL IT OUT AND IT VAPORIZES EVERYTHING FOR KILOMETERS.

THE TAURANS!

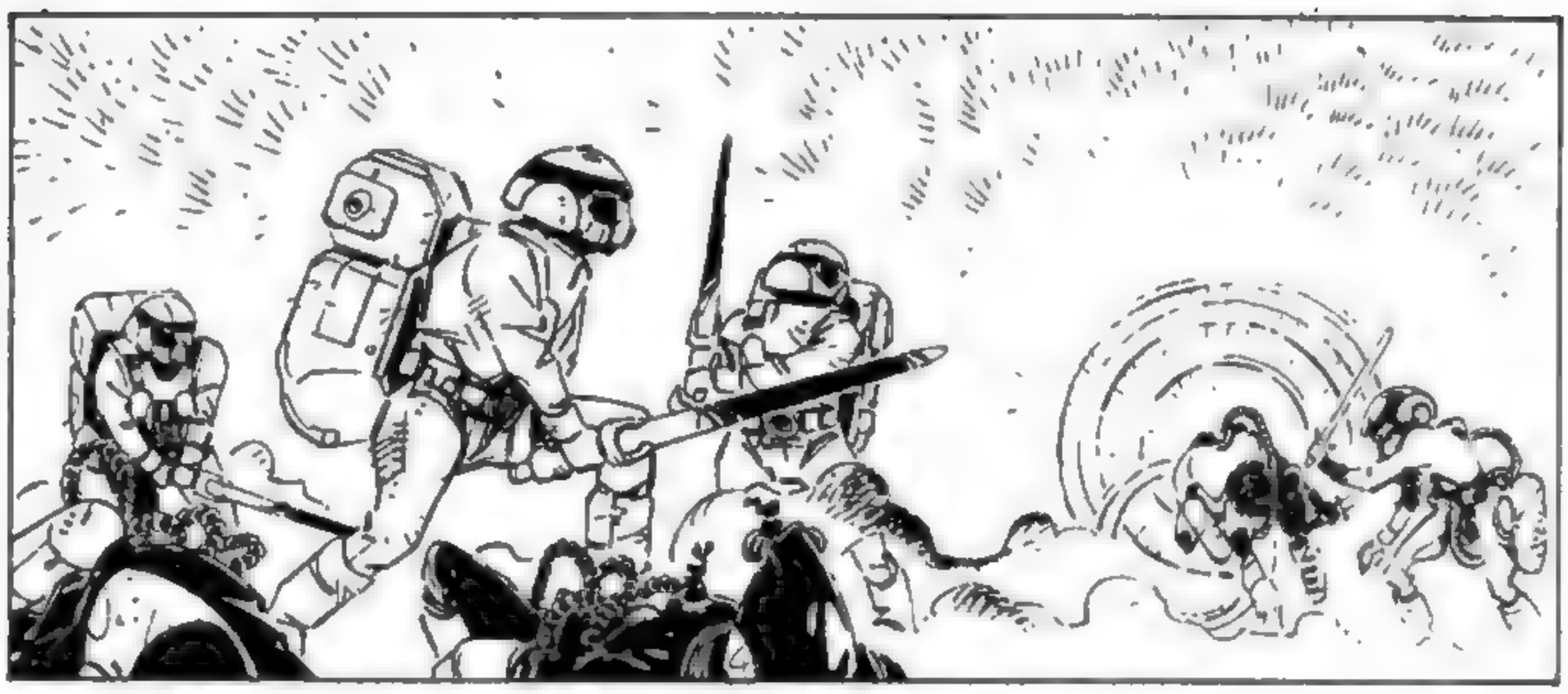
THEY COULDN'T HAVE TIMED IT BETTER.

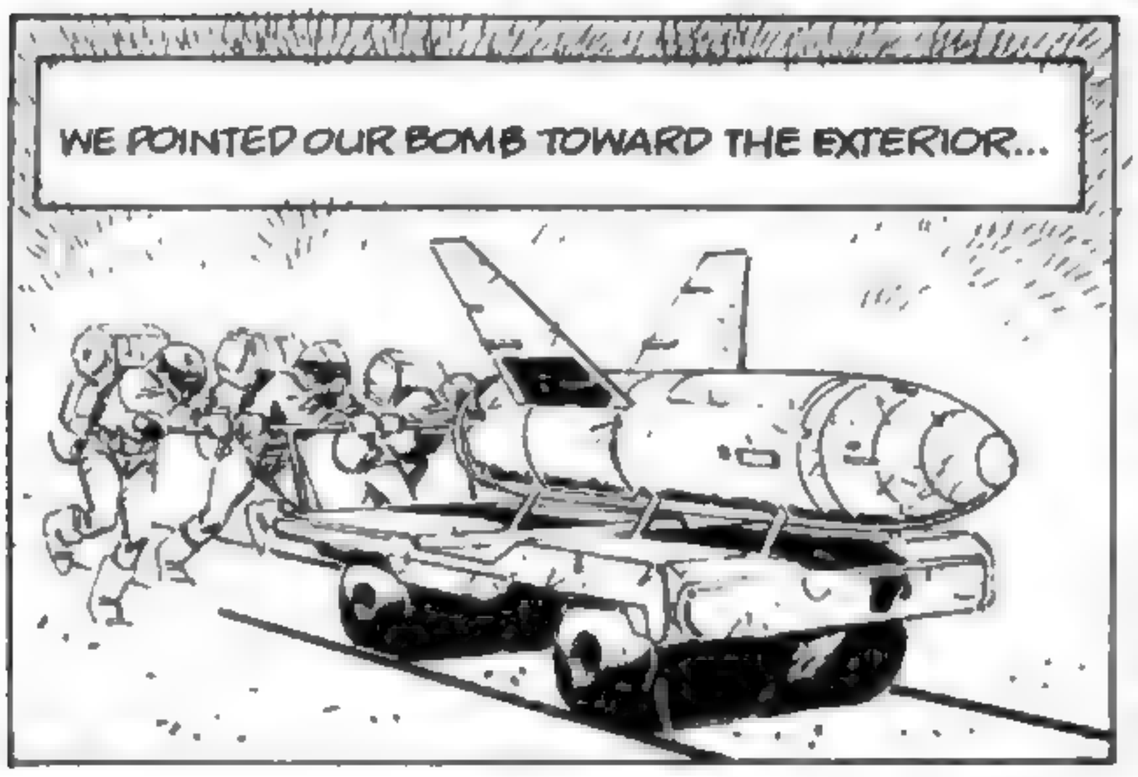
I THOUGHT OF A PROPHECY OF EINSTEIN'S...

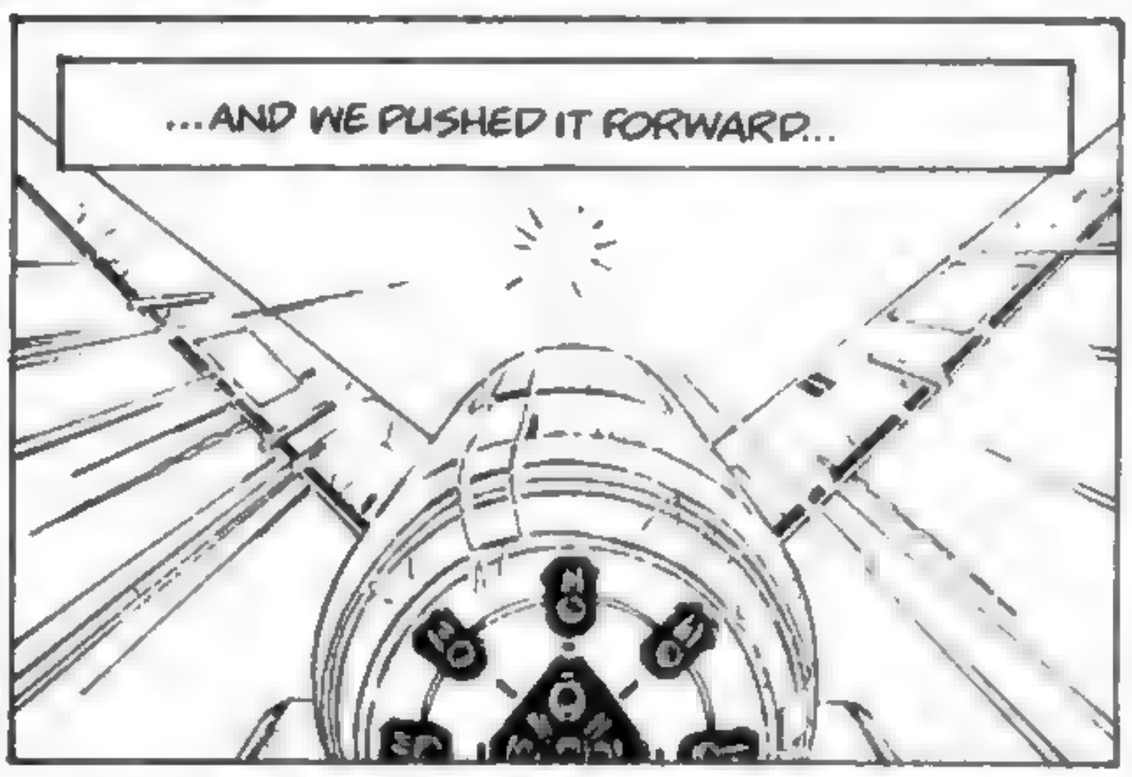
"I DON'T KNOW WHAT WEAPONS WILL BE USED IN THE THIRD WORLD WAR, BUT THE FOURTH WILL SEE THE SURVIVORS..."

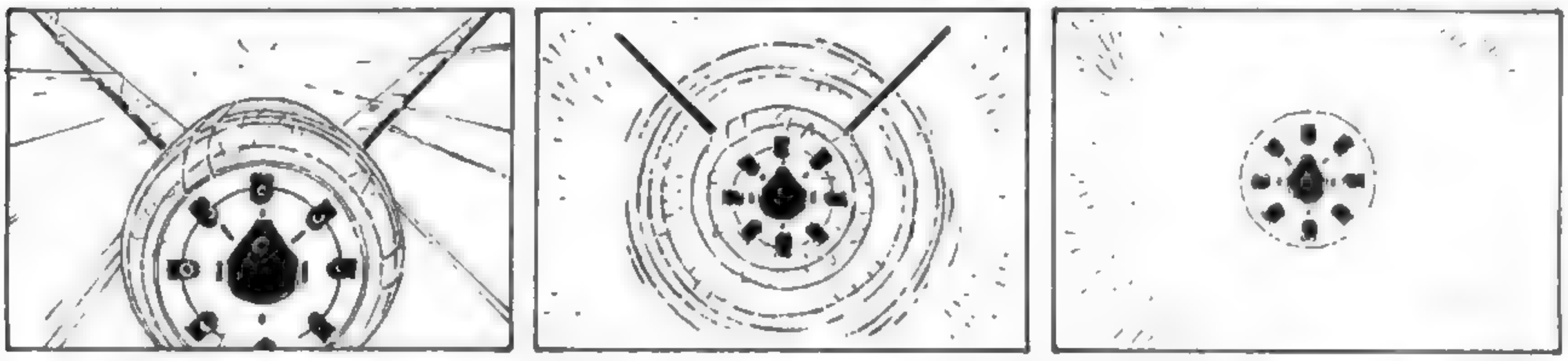
"...ARMED WITH CLUBS!"

THEY WEREN'T AS GOOD AS WE WERE WITH CLUBS AND SWORDS. WE CUT THE FIRST WAVE TO PIECES... BUT WE DIDN'T KNOW HOW MANY WERE STILL WAITING FOR US OUTSIDE...



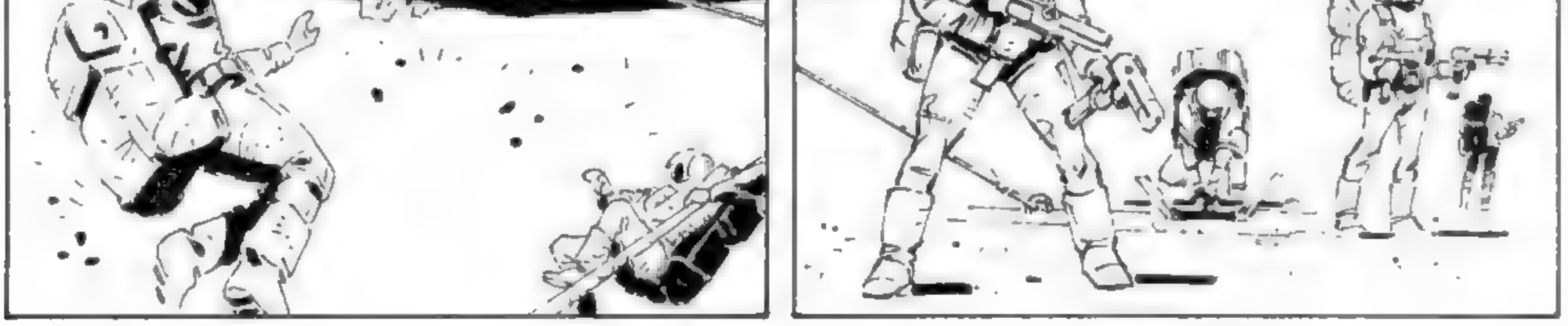






SOME SECONDS LATER, THE TEMPERATURE OUTSIDE WAS HOT AS THE INSIDE OF A STAR. WE FELT THE STASIS FIELD SETTLE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE CRATER CAUSED BY THE EXPLOSION.

IT TOOK SIX DAYS FOR THE SURROUNDING RADIATION TO REACH A REASONABLE LEVEL. WE SCATTERED OURSELVES AROUND THE PERIMETER AND CUT OFF THE STASIS FIELD GENERATOR.



YOU COULD SAY OUR ACTION HAD BEEN EFFICIENT...

WE FOUND OURSELVES IN THE CENTER OF AN ENORMOUS DEPRESSION, QUITE ALONE...

A TYPICAL "VICTORY." ALL THE TAURANS MASSACRED BUT ONLY NINE-TENTHS OF THE HUMANS DEAD. NO NEW INFORMATION TO SPEAK OF. THE SCOUT SHIP TOOK US TO THE LIFEBOAT PLACED IN ORBIT.

IT WAS A REAL PLEASURE TO TAKE OFF MY SPACE SUIT AND BREATHE AIR THAT DIDN'T SMELL LIKE RECYCLED MANDELLA!

THE FOREVER WAR

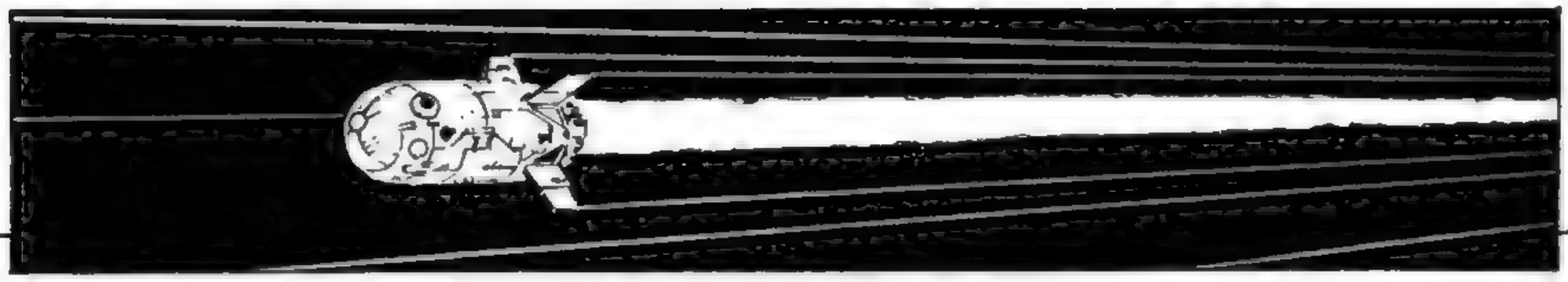
Book Three

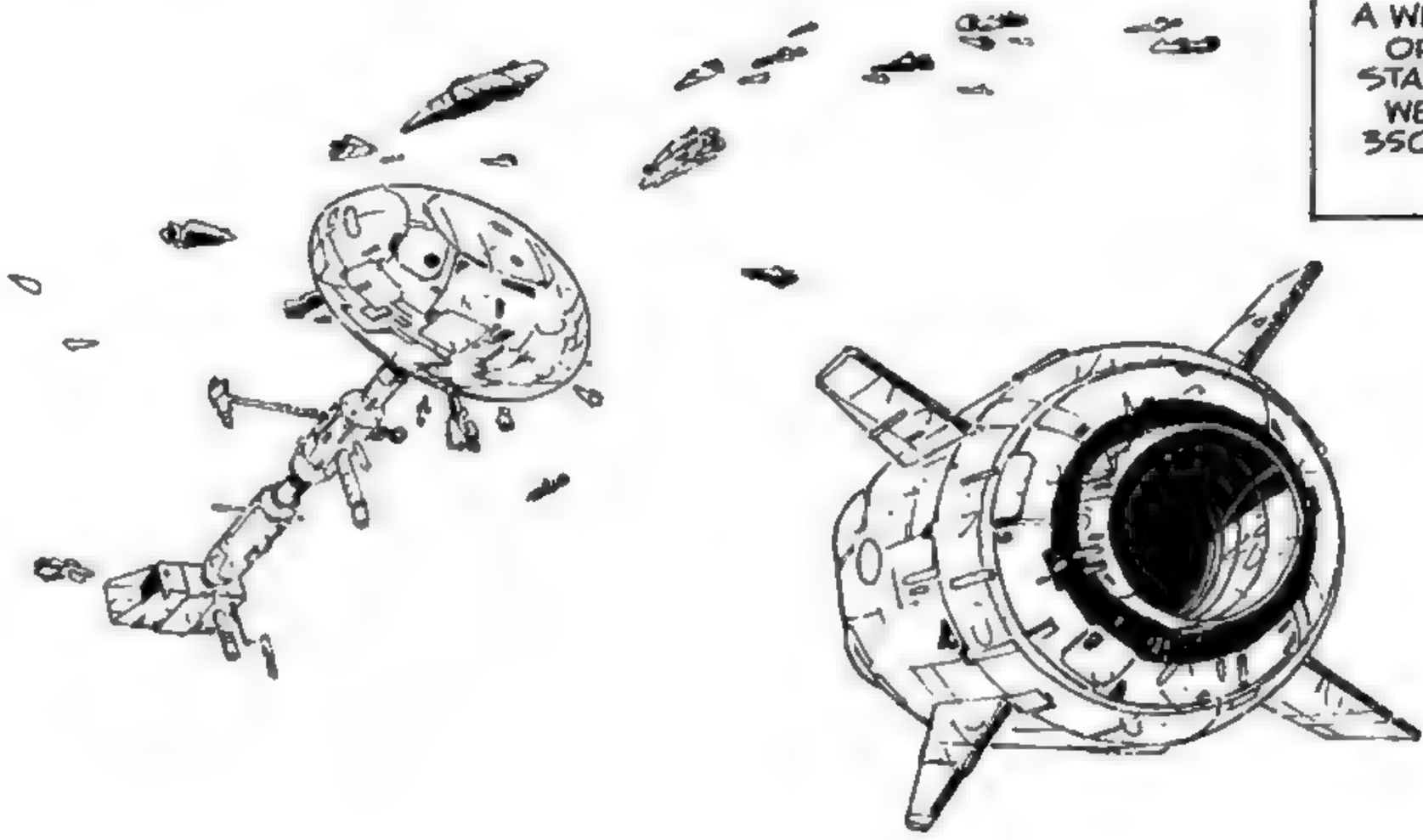
By

HALDEMAN

& MARVANO

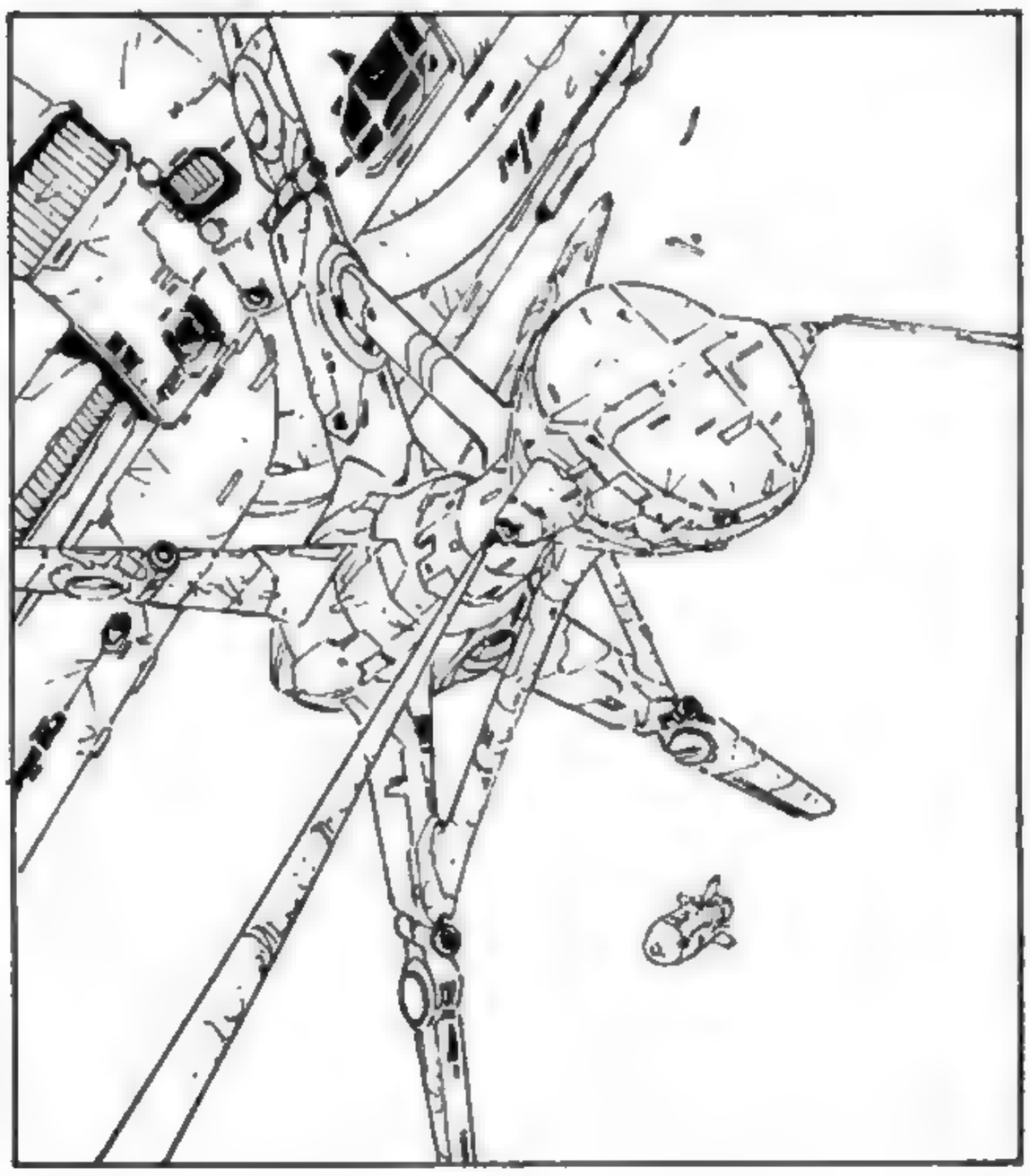
Chapter Five

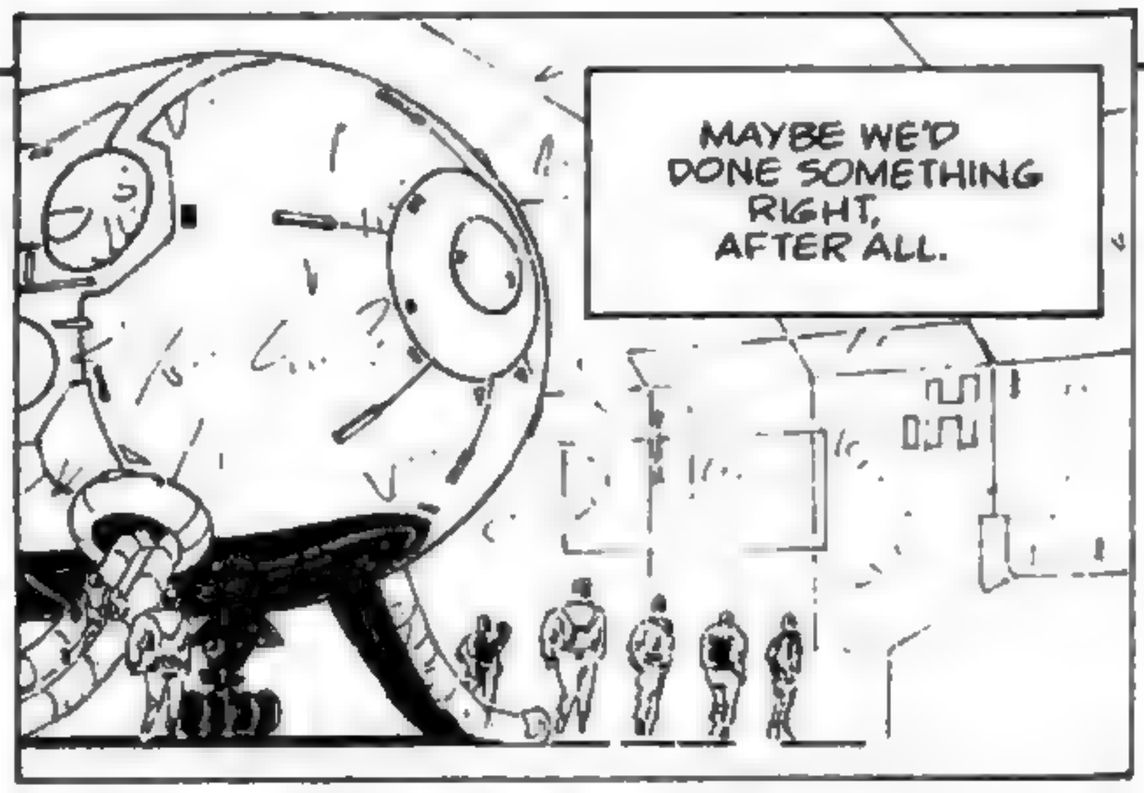




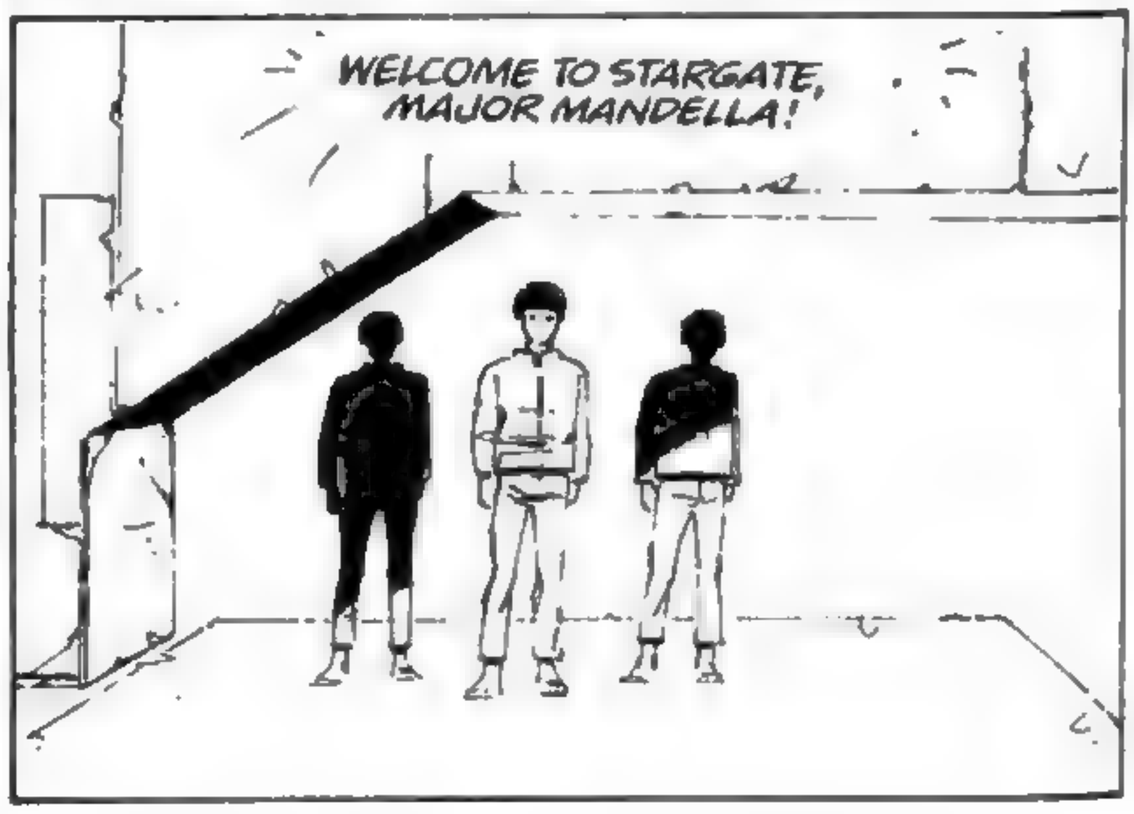
A WHOLE FLOTILLA ORBITED AROUND STARGATE WHEN WE ARRIVED, 350 YEARS LATER...

THE WAR HAD DEVELOPED FAVORABLY. A TAURAN CRUISER WAS EVEN STATIONED IN PARKING ORBIT. WE HAD NEVER SUCCEEDED IN CAPTURING ONE INTACT BEFORE.





MAYBE WE'D DONE SOMETHING RIGHT, AFTER ALL.



WELCOME TO STARGATE, MAJOR MANDELLA!

IS THERE A CORPORAL LAWRENCE KAHN WITH YOU?

...

CORPORAL KAHN WAS KILLED IN COMBAT ON SADE-138...

WHAT A SHAME.

...

WHO ARE YOU?

I AM, WE ARE, CLONES OF A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL. MY NAME USED TO BE KAHN. NOW IT IS MAN.

WE ARE BROTHERS.

WE ARE MORE THAN TEN MILLION ENTITIES WITH ONE CONSCIOUSNESS. LAWRENCE KAHN WAS OUR PRIMARY ANCESTOR.

YOU CAN READ ABOUT IT IN THESE BOOKS. OR NOT READ. YOU ARE FREE MEN AND WOMEN.

THE WAR IS OVER.

IT ENDED 221 YEARS AGO. WE ARE NOW IN THE YEAR 220, OR 3177, ACCORDING TO YOUR WAY OF CALCULATING. YOUR GROUP IS THE LAST WE WERE WAITING FOR, MAJOR. AFTER YOU LEAVE, STARGATE WILL BE DESTROYED.

IT EXISTS ONLY AS A RENDEZVOUS POINT FOR RETURNEES AND AS A MONUMENT TO HUMAN STUPIDITY AND SHAME, AS YOU WILL READ. DESTROYING IT WILL BE A CLEANSING.

YOU WILL BE OUR GUESTS ON STARGATE UNTIL YOU DECIDE WHERE YOU WANT TO GO.

YOU WOULDN'T LIKE EARTH, OR UNDERSTAND IT, BUT THERE ARE PLANETS FOR VETERANS. PARADISE WELCOMES HOMOSEXUALS. MIDDLE FINGER IS FAVORED BY HETEROS.

MIDDLE FINGER?

IT'S THE LAST PLANET WHERE HUMANS PERPETUATE THEMSELVES IN THE TRADITIONAL MANNER. THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME IS OBSCURE.

I COULD LIVE WITH IT. *SIGN ME UP!*

THE 1143-YEAR-LONG WAR HAD BEEN BEGUN ON FALSE PRETENSES AND ONLY CONTINUED BECAUSE THE TWO RACES WERE UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE. ONCE THEY COULD TALK, THE FIRST QUESTION WAS: "WHY DID YOU START IT?" AND THE RESPONSE WAS: "US?"

Fate Bar

THE TAURANS COULDN'T COMMUNICATE BECAUSE THEY HAD NO CONCEPT OF THE INDIVIDUAL. THEY'D BEEN NATURAL CLONES FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS.

IT WAS THE CRUISERS FULL OF MAN, KAHN CLONES, THAT ESTABLISHED CONTACT. FOR THE FIRST TIME, THEY WERE ABLE TO GET THROUGH TO EACH OTHER.

HI, WILLIAM.

CHARLIE. A GLASS?

THE BROTHERS TOLD ME THAT THEY CAN RESTORE MY MECHANICAL HALF TO ITS ORIGINAL STATE. THE WEIRD THING IS, THEY CAN MAKE ME EITHER HET OR HOME. MY CHOICE. FUNNY...

DIANA AND I...

WE JUST WONDERED... YOU WANT SOME COMPANY ON MIDDLE FINGER?

GOD, YES, CHARLIE. THAT WOULD BE TERRIFIC.

A LOT LESS LONELY.

MY DOSSIER WAS THICKER THAN THE OTHERS...

Gaultier Bavic

I CAME FROM SO MUCH FARTHER AWAY...

AND THE MEMORY OF MARYGAY HAUNTED MY PAST.

A YELLOWED SHEET WAS ATTACHED TO THE FIRST PAGE OF THE DOSSIER. I COULDN'T MISS IT...

THE LETTER WAS 280 YEARS OLD... AND I RECOGNIZED THE WRITING, EVEN AFTER ALL THIS TIME... A LETTER FROM THE GRAVE...

Stargate, 21 June 2889

William,

All this is in your personnel file. But knowing you, you might just chuck it. So I made sure you'd get this note.

Obviously I lived. Maybe you will, too. Join me.

I know from the records that you're out at Sade-138 and won't be back for a couple centuries. No problem.

I'm going to a planet they call Middle Finger, the fifth planet out from Mizar.

It's two collapsar jumps, ten months subjective. Middle Finger is a kind of Coventry for heterosexuals. They call it a "eugenic control baseline."

No matter. It took all of my money, and all the money of five other old-timers, but we bought a cruiser from UNEF. And we're using it as a time machine.

So I'm on a relativistic shuttle waiting for you.

All it does is go out five years and come back to Middle Finger, very fast. Every ten years I age about a month. So if you're on a schedule and still alive, I'll only be twenty-eight when you get here. Hurry!

I never found anybody else and I don't want anybody else. I don't care whether you're ninety years old or thirty.

If I can't be your lover, I'll be your nurse.

Marygay

OLD-TIMER HAS FIRST BOY

Marygay Potter-Mandela (24 Post Road, Paxton) gave birth on 25 August 3183 to a fine baby boy, 3.1 kilos.

Marygay lays claim to being the second-"oldest" resident of Middle Finger, having been born in 1990. She fought through most of the **Forever War** and then waited for her mate on the time shuttle, 286 years.

The baby, not yet named, was delivered at home with the help of a friend of the family, Dr. Diana Alsever - Moore.

MARYANN & JOE W. HALDEMAN SUMMER '87

LETTERS: L. LOIS BUJOLD

"To say that *The Forever War* is the best science fiction war novel ever written is to damn it with faint praise. It is, for all its techno-extrapolative brilliance, as fine and woundingly genuine a war story as any I've read."
—WILLIAM GIBSON, author of *Neuromancer* and *Spook Country*
THE FOREVER WAR
JOE HALDEMAN

THE FOREVER WAR

WINNER OF THE HUGO AND NEBULA AWARDS FOR BEST NOVEL OF THE YEAR

THE AUTHOR'S PREFERRED EDITION OF THE GROUNDBREAKING SF CLASSIC

JOE HALDEMAN